

«...it strikes like lightnings
to hear him sing»:

The Pattern of Contrast and Union in
Gerard Manley Hopkins' Work and its Relation to
Poetic Creativity and Religious Mimesis

Thesis

presented to the Faculty of Arts
of
the University of Zurich
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

GERHARD BRUEDERLIN
of Liestal / BL

Accepted on the Recommendation of
Professor Peter Hughes Ph. D.

Zurich 1987
Zentralstelle der Studentenschaft

«...it strikes like lightnings
to hear him sing»:

The Pattern of Contrast and Union in
Gerard Manley Hopkins' Work and its Relation to
Poetic Creativity and Religious Mimesis

Thesis

presented to the Faculty of Arts
of
the University of Zurich
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by
GERHARD BRUEDERLIN
of Liestal / BL

Accepted on the Recommendation of
Professor Peter Hughes Ph. D.

Zurich 1987
Zentralstelle der Studentenschaft



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/IA41507228_0042

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	1
2. Aesthetic "Inscape": Contrast and Union in Hopkins' Concept of Mortal Beauty	6
3. A Miscellany of Unrest: The Great Synthesis on the Horizon	26
4. Ethical "Inscape": The Union of Contrasts	45
5. Hopkins and Imitatio: Imitation and the Poet	85
Two Equivalent Unions of Contrast: Christ's Incarnation and its Imitation by the Creation of the Poem	91
The One behind: All the Way Back to the Creator	116
Imitation and Originality: The Actualization of the Past in Poetic Language	125
6. Man's Inborn Antithesis: On the Eve of Unselving	139
7. The Second Great Synthesis: Completing the Imitatio Christi through the Final Stability of the Ego's Silence	170
From Contemplative Vision to Introspective Experience	171
From Oxford to Dublin: The "Deutschland" and the "Eurydice"	185
"And the word of it Sacrificed": The Text between Incarnational Creation and Redeeming Non-Creation	202
Death as the Paradox of Completion: Poetry and Prophecy	214
Selective Bibliography	235
Primary Literature (GMH)	235
Primary Literature (Other authors)	236
Critical Works	238

A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

It is a great pleasure to record my thanks to Professor Peter Hughes for suggesting that I write this thesis, for directing my ideas throughout my studies and for paving the way of an intellectually most rewarding year at Yale. I owe a real debt to Professors J. Hillis Miller, Geoffrey H. Hartman and John Hollander of Yale University for their challenging criticism and advice. I am especially grateful to Professor Bryan Short of Northern Arizona University whose help as a teacher and friend in preparing the manuscript was invaluable. Our many and fruitful discussions together with Helle, Lis, and Yushiko provided a lot of excellent clues which kept me writing. My thanks additionally go to Professor Brian Gibbons who accepted to be my co-examinator, to my parents for their financial support, and last not least to my wife Gisèle for tolerating my absences, typing part of the manuscript and supporting me in every possible way.

The counter-thrust brings together,
and from tones at variance comes
perfect attunement, and all things
come to pass through conflict.

Heraclitus ("Fragment 75")

The poet, described in ideal perfection, brings the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other, according to their relative worth and dignity. He diffuses a tone and spirit of unity, that blends, and (as it were) fuses, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power, to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination. This power, first put in action by the will and understanding, and retained under their irremissive, though gentle and unnoticed, controul (laxis effertur habenis) reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness, with difference; of the general, with the concrete; the idea, with the image; the individual, with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness, with old and familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion, with more than usual order; judgement ever awake and steady self-possession, with enthusiasm and feeling profound or vehement; and while it blends and harmonizes the natural and the artificial, still subordinates art to nature; the manner to the matter; and our admiration of the poet to our sympathy with the poetry.

Coleridge (Biographia Literaria, XIV)

1 . I N T R O D U C T I O N

Since Robert Bridges, in the preface to the notes of his first edition, deprecatingly commented upon Gerard Manley Hopkins' poetry as "a naked encounter of sensualism and asceticism",¹ contrast, opposition and ambiguity have been generally recognized by Hopkins scholars as important elements in the poet's work. Yet early criticism such as elaborated by Edward Sapir, William Empson and the New Critics either uses a psychological approach which envisages self-division as the main target,² or it contends that textual evidence analogously shows that Hopkins became a psychoneurotic who was torn between the Scylla of poetry and the Charybdis of religion. Such readings rooted in the detection of the evident opposition between Hopkins' sensuous response to beauty in "A Vision of the Mermaids" and the strong impulse towards purity in "The Habit of Perfection".³ Although other and above all later critics began to deny the conflict between priest and poet and argued that the two vocations did not exclude nor stifle each other, criticism continuously tended to circle around the question whether Hopkins was a priest who happened to write some good poetry

¹ Gerard Manley Hopkins, Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, ed. by Robert Bridges, London, 1918, 97

² "The real Hopkins is a passionate soul unendingly in conflict. The consuming mysticism, the intense religious faith are unreconciled with a basic sensuality that leaves the poet no peace" (Edward Sapir, "Gerard Hopkins", Poetry 18, 1921, 334).

³ Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, ed. by W.H. Gardner and Norman H. MacKenzie, London, 1967 (hereafter cited as Poems), 8-11, 31-2

in his spare time or whether he was a genuine poet who, unfortunately or not, chose the secluded life of a Jesuit priest. By dwelling on this existing, but narrow-minded, natural dichotomy of being leading Hopkins' character and personality into two different directions, criticism has mostly failed to realize that conflict is not only important from a historical-biographical point of view but that contrast and union also play a crucial part in Hopkins' perception of nature, his concept of religion and morals, his apprehension of literary creation and their mutual relation to the goal to which everything else in his life is subordinated: the imitation of Christ.

To begin with, Hopkins is particularly concerned with contrast patterns of the dappled and variegated in sky, earth, water and vegetation; forms and colors that are set off against a contrast display universal and ideal beauty. This contrapuntal concept of the outer universe is reflected by poetic creation: all art, especially poetry, follows the principle of parallelism in a pattern either of contrast or of comparison:

The artificial part of poetry, perhaps we shall be right to say all artifice, reduces itself to the principle of parallelism. The structure of poetry is that of continuous parallelism, ranging from the technical so-called Parallelisms of Hebrew poetry and the antiphons of Church music up to the intricacy of Greek or Italian or English verse. But parallelism is of two kinds necessarily--where the opposition is clearly marked, and where it is transitional rather or chromatic.⁴

⁴ Gerard Manley Hopkins, "Poetic Diction" in: The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins, ed. by Humphry House and compl. by Graham Storey, London, 1959 (hereafter cited as Journals), 84.

Hopkins' conception of poetry as a combination of likeness and difference recalls Wordsworth's artistic credo (cf. also

Moreover, on a moral and religious plane, the contrast pattern serves Hopkins to define the essence of goodness: there is no white if there is no black; there is no right if there is no wrong.

On the one hand, this whole, interactive network of perceptive-sensual contrasts, creative-artistical oppositions and philosophical-religious conflicts is brought to light and comes out by the very act of Hopkins' writing; on the other hand, Hopkins' poetic creation temporarily reconciles all these antagonisms by fulfilling his longing for ever cherished Platonic unification and Parmenidean oneness or 'Being', an aspiration which then develops into a veritable imitation of Christ Who Himself symbolizes the abolition of the most extreme dualism conceivable, namely of the distance between heaven and earth, between the human and the divine. Thus my view of Hopkins' poetic activity tries to get away from traditional criticism which suffered and partly still suffers from the simplistic division between the "aestheticism" of literary creation and the "asceticism" of doctrinal belief, an opposition which Hopkins attempted to reconcile in his life but, above all, in his poetry itself: poetic creation is not one pole of the dichotomy but must be considered the verbalization and simultaneous solution of the conflict.

An analysis of Hopkins' patterns of contrast and union therefore grows into an interpretation of

chapters 2 and 5 of this thesis): "Among the chief of these causes [upon which the pleasure received from metrical language depends] is to be reckoned a principle which must be well known to those who have made any of the Arts the object of accurate reflection; I mean the pleasure which the mind derives from the perception of similitude in dissimilitude" (William Wordsworth, Poems, Oxford, 1984, 610)

the whole of his poetic writings and literary creativity. It is therefore the designated goal and the high ambition of this thesis to reveal original aspects of Hopkins' poetry by means of shedding light on the various levels on which contrasts work and by means of showing in the course of a further analysis that the overcoming of contrasts creates (and uncreates) both faith and (the) word through a striking relation between religious fulfilment and poetic (non-) creativity. Of course the battle within the self cannot be avoided, but this genuine state of self-division manifests itself only in the last years of the poet's life and takes the form of a conflict between the reality of the lyrical I's rottenness and his desire to be like Christ: "You are certainly wrong about Hyde being overdrawn: my Hyde is worse."⁵

Since oppositions and their reconciliation permeate Hopkins' entire work in the form of an ever renewed dialectical movement, the idea of a comparison with Hegel suggests itself. It is striking indeed to see the way in which Hegel's philosophy of dialectical evolution affected Hopkins' own progress in time and its expressive reflection by poetry.⁶ A brief synopsis of Hopkins' poetic development demonstrates that every contrast pattern (antithesis) is followed by the poet's attempt to achieve new harmony (synthesis) which, in turn, forms the starting point (thesis) of

⁵ Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges, ed. by C.C. Abbott, London, 1970 (hereafter cited as Letters to Bridges), 238

⁶ Hegel's influence on Hopkins probably worked through the intermediary of Heraclitus who was particularly revered by the German philosopher and who was not at all unknown to Hopkins himself (cf. chapters 2 and 7).

another dialectical step: the objective apprehension of contrasts as a mark of beauty in natural objects of perception introduces the opposition between this beauty and its own mortality. Only a religious fusion of transitoriness and transcendence brings then forth a Hegelian synthesis which is again opposed by man's inborn sinfulness. This conflict becomes internalized within the speaker's self before it is also reconciled by an imitation of Christ's final, self-emptying sacrifice.

2 . A E S T H E T I C " I N S C A P E " :

C o n t r a s t a n d U n i o n i n H o p k i n s '

C o n c e p t o f M o r t a l B e a u t y

The main foundations of Gerard Manley Hopkins' aesthetic theory were laid during his studies at Oxford between 1864 and 1868. Greek philosophers, above all Plato and Parmenides, exerted a continuing influence on the young scholar and caused an early enthusiasm for the dialectic mode of thinking in pro and contra with a simultaneous propensity to view structures as a tension between opposites that was only released by a unifying synthesis.

The first outcome of his admiration for Plato was Hopkins' lengthy undergraduate essay "On the Origin of Beauty: a Platonic Dialogue", in which a professor of aesthetics (probably standing for Hopkins himself) sets out his ideas to John Hanbury, a scholar, and to Middleton, a painter. The professor's goal is to show, by means of the structure of objects in nature and art such as a chestnut-fan, an oak tree, a painting or a poem, that there is a law behind beauty: de gustibus est disputandum! In the course of an entertaining conversation the professor's theories eventually come down to the result that beauty is the relation between seemingly contradictory opposites:

"Then the beauty of the oak and the chestnut-fan and the sky is a mixture of likeness and difference or agreement and disagreement or consistency

and variety or symmetry and change (Journals, 90).

[...]

Beauty therefore is a relation, and the apprehension of it a comparison (ibid., 95).

It thus becomes clear that an object (or part of an object) in itself cannot be beautiful. It needs another object (or part of an object) to be compared with:

It seems then that it is not the excellence of any two things (or more) in themselves, but those two things as viewed by the light of each other, that makes beauty (Journals, 93).¹

Likeness as well as difference may serve as starting-point of the comparison or, as Hopkins points out, of the perception of parallelism between things: likeness in order to find the difference between things and difference in order to find their likeness. In other words, likeness implies unlikeness and unlikeness implies likeness. Hopkins adds in "On the Signs of Health and Decay in the Arts" that the right proportion of sameness and difference is "to be the source or the seat of Beauty", and the analysis of the nature of beauty, in turn, is "the beginning of any science of aesthetics" (Journals, 75).

Yet it cannot be too strongly emphasized that it is difference, contrast, and change which become the effective criterion for defining Hopkins' two types of beauty (by analogy with music): "diatonic" and "chromatic" (Journals, 104).² "Chromatic beauty"

¹ Later on, when Hopkins' device of "inscape" came to mean the perception of beauty in nature through parallelism, this comparison became a mere operation within the observer's mind.

² Along with "chromatic", Hopkins uses the expressions "gradual", "continuous", and "qualitative beauty", whereas "abrupt", "parallelistic", "intervallary", and "quantitative" are synonyms for the "diatonic" kind of beauty (Journals, 76).

means a passing of the parallel parts or wholes into each other, as in the transition from red into blue in an evening sky. "Diatonic beauty", by contrast, abruptly separates parts or wholes from each other, as in the opposition of red and blue in the piedness of a kingfisher. It is not difficult to discover which of the two types of beauty Hopkins preferred: the diatonic kind of proportion proved to be much more attractive to him whether in nature: "... on a charming day, sky pied with clouds, ..." (Journals, 135), or in poetry.³ This attitude is not surprising because diatonic beauty reveals a higher degree of difference which, as we have seen, is crucial for the discovery of beauty, whereas chromatic beauty is more hinged to a similarity between the phases of transition:

Both [diatonic and chromatic beauty] seem really to be expressions of proportion, though it is generally associated with the former, to our ideas (Journals, 76).

For Hopkins, the importance of diatonism along with the dislike for chromatism is due to his opposition to all philosophies of flux, "of development in time", as he called it in "The Probable Future of Metaphysics" (Journals, 119). By this he meant especially Hegel's philosophy

led by the ideas of Historical Development, of things both in thought and fact detaching and differing and individualising and expressing themselves, of continuity and of time (Journals, 119).

Against such current, materialistic, ideas of flux without

³ All figures of speech that were dear to Hopkins the poet, such as metaphor, simile, and contrast, belong to the device of "parallelism" which "we put under the head of diatonic beauty" (Journals, 106).

absolute forms, Hopkins set the immediate future of a new "Realism", a revival of "Platonism" which would bring forth final, predetermined, and inalterable types again:

It may be maintainable then that species are fixed and to be fixed only at definite distances in the string and that the developing principle will only act when the precise conditions are fulfilled (Journals, 120).

In philosophies of development, by contrast, Hopkins detected an incapacity to reach the desired level of finality: "it [Hegel's philosophy] must contradict itself whether it claims to be final or not" (Journals, 119). Ideas of development, for this reason, are bound to go beyond the boundaries of the moment of actual being important to Hopkins: philosophies of flux reach into the past and, in the event even worse, into the future. As a matter of fact, the next chapter will demonstrate that, during his Oxford years, Hopkins experienced a growing inner restlessness and despair of actual unity and fulfillment which ran parallel to his thoughts turning away from the present towards an uncertain and seemingly distant future. In other words, Hopkins' peace of mind was subject to the realization of the Platonic ideal of finality as opposed to Hegel's theory which made flux the final end of the revelation of being. It is worth noticing that Hopkins did less object to flux in general than to Hegel's approach because of its blatant extremism and one-sidedness:

And this at least must be allowed, that philosophy must not so much speak of right and wrong in systems but must acknowledge its history and growth to itself and see that it is meaningless without such a history and growth. Only the matter cannot be dropped here (Journals, 119-20).

Hopkins' relation to Hegel and his ideas is interesting indeed: it is true that Hopkins maintained that "I have had no time to read even the English books about Hegel, much less the original" and that "I care for him [Duns Scotus] more even than Aristotle and more pace tua than a dozen Hegels" (Letters to Bridges, 30-1),⁴ but he must have been at least superficially familiar with Hegel's thought because the philosophical and theological training of the Society of Jesus which Hopkins entered in 1868 also included frequent exercises dealing with 'modern' authors:

Besides the lectures, which are given in Latin, the students are summoned three times a week to take part in an academical exercise which is one of the most valuable elements in the philosophical and theological training of the Society. It lasts an hour, during the first quarter of which one of the students has to give a synopsis of the last two lectures of the professor. After this, two other students, previously appointed for the purpose, have to bring against the doctrine laid down any possible objection that they can find in books or invent for themselves. Modern books are ransacked for these objections, and the 'objicients' do their best to hunt out difficulties which may puzzle the exponent of the truth, who is called the 'defendent.' Locke, Hegel, Descartes, Malebranche, John Stuart Mill, Mansel, Sir William Hamilton, and other modern writers, are valuable contributors for those who have to attack the Catholic doctrine.⁵

Moreover the Jesuit students seem to have been much less philosophically indoctrinated than could be expected from such a severe and strict order. In spite of St. Ignatius' authority and of the widespread acceptance of St. Thomas Aquinas' teach-

⁴ Note: Unless otherwise indicated, emphasis is in the original.

⁵ Richard F. Clarke, "The Training of a Jesuit", Nineteenth Century 40, 1896, 221

Spanish chestnuts: their inscape here bold, jutting, somewhat oak-like, attractive, the branching visible and the leaved peaks spotted so as to make crests of eyes (Journals, 179).

What is so striking about this passage besides the precise Ruskinian pinning down of the trees, is the attempt to provide nature with a human element. Personification, indeed, is a frequent feature in Hopkins' journals and will concern us again in a later chapter. The second passage, written a few years later, is even more suggestive because "inscape" has already been transferred from natural perception into the field of artistic creation.

But if it [verse] has a meaning and is meant to be heard for its own sake it will be poetry if you take poetry to be a kind of composition and not the virtue or success or excellence of that kind, as eloquence is the virtue of oratory and not oratory only and beauty the virtue of inscape and not inscape only (Journals, 289).

It has often been pointed out that Hopkins mentioned "inscape" (and its fellow notion "instress") for the first time in his notes on Parmenides:

His [Parmenides'] great text, which he repeats with religious conviction, is that Being is and Not-being is not--which perhaps one can say, a little over-defining his meaning, means that all things are upheld by instress and are meaningless without it. [...] His feeling for instress, for the flush and foredrawn, and for inscape / is most striking and from this one can understand Plato's reverence for him as the great father of Realism (Journals, 127).

I have quoted this passage in full for two reasons: first, it shows very well that the author of the essay is in sympathy with Parmenides' ideas. Second, which is a consequence, it has led many Hopkins scholars to identify Parmenides' "Being" with Hopkins' "inscape", which is not altogether correct,

sensation which was so symptomatic of the Victorian society of facts and documentation. The basis of this attitude towards nature is the early 19th century scientist's love of classification and close scrutiny of all kinds of phenomena. Actually, the aesthetic theories of the Pre-Raphaelites, as set out by John Ruskin's monumental Modern Painters, were to influence the young Hopkins very deeply. His journals and diaries bear witness to the almost scientific exactitude with which he observed things in nature, combining both a curiosity about appearance and structure and an aesthetic admiration for his objects. This search for realism, truthfulness, but also for beauty, was finally to bring about his doctrine of "inscape".

"Inscape" combines the two ideas which were at the core of Hopkins' early aesthetic theories: the fixed type of realistic distinctiveness as opposed to philosophies of flux, and the union of sameness and difference which underlies his concept of beauty. "Inscape" is therefore a notion that brings together the goals of both Nature and Art: Truth and Beauty.⁷ Two examples from Hopkins' journals may suffice to justify the relation of the "inscape" of a thing to both its distinctiveness and beauty. The first one dates from Hopkins' trip to Switzerland in 1868 and shows the detailed, realistic, and beautiful apprehension of his favorite object of perception, trees:

⁷ It is generally known that Hopkins was very much interested in the etymology and roots of words. In this respect, "inscape" could be considered a notion Hopkins created in order to cover the fields of both "scape" and "shape" because they have a common Middle English origin: 'schap'. The part of "shape" would then stand for Beauty whereas "scape" would represent the element of distinctiveness and Truth.

Spanish chestnuts: their inscape here bold, jutting, somewhat oak-like, attractive, the branching visible and the leaved peaks spotted so as to make crests of eyes (Journals, 179).

What is so striking about this passage besides the precise Ruskinian pinning down of the trees, is the attempt to provide nature with a human element. Personification, indeed, is a frequent feature in Hopkins' journals and will concern us again in a later chapter. The second passage, written a few years later, is even more suggestive because "inscape" has already been transferred from natural perception into the field of artistic creation.

But if it [verse] has a meaning and is meant to be heard for its own sake it will be poetry if you take poetry to be a kind of composition and not the virtue ~~or~~ success or excellence of that kind, as eloquence is the virtue of oratory and not oratory only and beauty the virtue of inscape and not inscape only (Journals, 289).

It has often been pointed out that Hopkins mentioned "inscape" (and its fellow notion "instress") for the first time in his notes on Parmenides:

His [Parmenides'] great text, which he repeats with religious conviction, is that Being is and Not-being is not--which perhaps one can say, a little over-defining his meaning, means that all things are upheld by instress and are meaningless without it. [...] His feeling for instress, for the flush and foredrawn, and for inscape / is most striking and from this one can understand Plato's reverence for him as the great father of Realism (Journals, 127).

I have quoted this passage in full for two reasons: first, it shows very well that the author of the essay is in sympathy with Parmenides' ideas. Second, which is a consequence, it has led many Hopkins scholars to identify Parmenides' "Being" with Hopkins' "inscape", which is not altogether correct,

because "inscape" has not only a static Parmenidean aspect but also a dynamic one. To begin with, let us have a look at Parmenides' ideas: he takes for granted that Being stands only for what has a certain extension in space. The assumption of motion or of development, consequently, presupposes "Not-being". If something is to move somewhere, the place must have been empty space, which he in his theory equates with "Not-being". The same for creation: what is in the process of becoming something, cannot have existed before. Parmenides rather boldly concludes that there is nothing else but univocal being and that motion, development and diversity are only illusory appearances.

This interpretation is certainly not true for Hopkins who particularly delighted in movements of all kinds. In an early poem he exclaims:

And millbrook-slips with pretty pace
Gallop along the meadow grass.
O lovely ease in change of place!

(Poems, 171)

Movements are believed to be a direct manifestation of the divine: "God gave things a forward and perpetual motion."⁸ Teleological linearity as opposed in this passage to the Devil's coil or spiral underscores the movement along the time-axis. Furthermore we have seen that difference, contrast and therefore change in time and space are a necessary element of the comparison which alone constitutes diatonic or chromatic beauty, "the virtue of inscape". Thus, on the one hand,

⁸ Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Sermons and Devotional Writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins, ed. by Christopher Devlin, London, 1959 (hereafter cited as Sermons), 198-9

an enthusiastic awareness of flux, of what Parmenides called "Not-being", is discernible. This indulgence in change and its potential recalls of course Heraclitus, the Greek philosopher and contemporary of Parmenides who preached the eternal change of things in nature.

Earlier, on the other hand, I have referred to "inscape" (without using the word) as a static effect of analytic concentration which freezes flux into its distinct contributory parts. Apparently, these two aspects of "inscape" encompass Parmenides' notions of "Being" (the idea of oneness) and "Not-being" (the "want of oneness", Journals, 129). Hopkins realized this unification himself:

For the phenomenal world [...] is the brink ... of two principles which meet in the scape of everything--probably Being, under its modification or siding of particular oneness or Being, and Not-Being, under its siding of the Many. [...] The inscape will be the proportion of the mixture (Journals, 130).

Thus "inscape" can be considered a fusion of Parmenides' anti-flux theories and Heraclitus' philosophy of change; it thereby reconciles the ideas of union and contrast and, consequently, represents a union of contrasts itself.

Before I venture on a further definition of "inscape", I would like to have an even closer look at its two aspects, that is to say, contrast and union. First I want to deal with the contrastive aspect or what I call the paradox of "inscape": perception depends upon the situation, and for Hopkins this "inscaping"-situation is determined by any change in time or space, such as the motion of the object or the observer or the alteration of light. Any variation in one of these factors is bound to change the object's

whole "inscape".⁹ The following passage, again taken from Hopkins' diary on his journey to Switzerland, demonstrates the "inscape's" change according to the onlooker's position relative to the object:

The normal colour of the lake water [the lake of Lucerne] from near at least, bottle blue; from some way up we saw it with the sea shoaling colours, purple and blue, the purple expressing the rose of the chord to the eye From the top the lakes egg-blue, blue strongly modulated to green (Journals, 170).

To put it plainly, flux gives rise to different "inscapes" of the same object, in this case the color of the lake water. These single Parmenidean visions of reality are usually close to each other and form stages of an almost chromatic transition:

Two beautiful sights: printed upon the sun, a glowing silver piece, came out the sharp visible leafage of invisible trees, on either side nothing whatever could be seen of them, and these leaves handful for handful, changed as I walked (Journals, 239).

But the range of difference in one thing as revealed by multifarious "inscapes" can be expanded between wide-set, even opposite poles: "inscape" is a device of polarity, a paradox: "Thou art lightning and love, I found it, a winter and warm" (The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanza 9, Poems, 54). This line from Hopkins' major poem demonstrates a use of paradox which turns out to be very effective in metaphorical language. Sometimes, even in natural comparisons, the tertium comparationis provides only a weak connection between two things that do

⁹ The subject's location is usually central to perspective: "The earth and heaven, so little known, / Are measured outwards from my breast" (Poems, 171).

not seem to have anything to do with each other: "[I] caught that inscape in the horse ... running on the likeness of a horse to a breaker, a wave of the sea curling over" (Journals, 241-2).

This brief digression into the world of figures of speech, however, also demonstrates, and here we come to the second aspect, that "inscape" is a device of integration as well; it includes the tertium comparationis that combines the various views of the same object into one whole. This final urge for union is stronger than the awareness of flux but inconceivable without it. It eventually elucidates Hopkins' preference for Parmenides over Heraclitus: "... the desire of unity is prior to that of difference ..." (Journals, 83):

In watching the sea one should be alive to the oneness which all its motion and tumult receives from its perpetual balance and falling this way and that to its level (Journals, 225).¹⁰

It is as if in the very moment of perception, flux is condensed into one overall impression: the innumerable static pictures form one complete and unique impression in the observer's mind, an impression whose static distinctiveness is identical with that of its constituting elements.

Since sense knowledge is only sure "for the exact moment"¹¹,

¹⁰ I think that Hopkins' view of Heraclitus was slightly distorted because the ultimate point in the latter's cognition is a homogenous law behind perpetual flux. This moves him closer to Hopkins' standpoint: "They do not comprehend how a thing agrees at variance with itself; it is an attunement turning back on itself, like that of the bow and the lyre" ("Fragment 78" in Charles H. Kahn, The Art and Thought of Heraclitus, Cambridge, 1979, 65).

¹¹ Gerard Manley Hopkins, unpubl. commentary on Plato's Theaetetus, quoted in Thomas A. Zaniello, "The Tonic of Platonism", Hopkins Quarterly 5, 1978, 13

Hopkins conceives of the permanent motion of natural forms as a passage from one static and distinctive "inscape" into another. If these different, individualising stages are combined into one perceptive unit, the observer gets an insight into the common essence, pattern or (Platonic) type of the species:¹²

A beautiful instance of inscape sided on the slide, that is / successive sidings of one inscape, is seen in the behaviour of the flag flower from the shut bud to the full blowing: each term you can distinguish is beautiful in itself and of course if the whole 'behaviour' were gathered up and so stalled it would have a beauty of all the higher degree (Journals, 211).

Only the multiplication of "inscapes" through motion "gives the visible law" (Journals, 139), that is to say, leads to the characteristic features of the entire class:

The chestnuts down by St. Joseph's were a beautiful sight: each spike had its own pitch, yet each followed in its place in the sweep with a deeper and deeper stoop. When the wind tossed them they plunged and crossed one another without losing their inscape. (Observe that motion multiplies inscape only when inscape is discovered, otherwise it disfigures) (Journals, 199).

Consequently, "inscape" is evident on different levels: Hopkins uses the term for the pattern which unifies a single object as well as for the type which unifies the various objects of the same kind. Different types, in turn, are supposed to

¹² Cf. Plato's *Timaeus* in which the creation of the universe is described as union: "But two things cannot be rightly put together without a third; there must be some bond of union between them. And the fairest bond is that which makes the most complete fusion of itself and the things it combines, and proportion is best adapted to effect such a union" (*The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. by Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, Princeton, 1980, 1163).

form a new whole on a still higher level, and so on ad infinitum, that is to say, until the final pattern is reached, the ultimate common nature, the ideal type, the "inscape" which contains all natures: Christ. Hopkins provides an interesting parallel of this constituting principle from the field of poetic creation:

The two terms of parallelism [of sameness and difference] make a whole of beauty, but these wholes again may be the terms of a higher whole; as so many lines make up each speech in a scene, so many speeches each scene, so many scenes each act, so many acts a play, and on the Greek stage, four plays a tetralogy: I mean only that works of art are composite, having unity and subordination (Journals, 114).

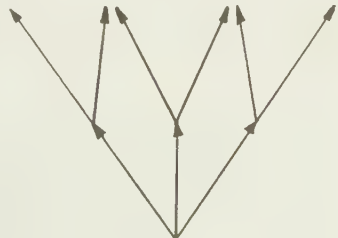
"Inscape" is thus a cognitive framework relating to the whole of reality. In its acceptance of flux and being it becomes a thoroughly Christian means to a classification of nature with as its highest entity Christ, from Whom all comes and to Whom all goes. This system, which could be given the form of a pyramid, turns upside down Darwin's actual evolutionist structure which argues upwards from the single to the manifold.¹³ In other words, the shadow of Plato's fixed types always lurks

¹³ Diagram 1: The structures of Being in Hopkins (Plato) and Darwin

Plato/Hopkins



Darwin



behind Hopkins' whole concept of "inscape":

Realism will undoubtedly once more maintain that the Idea is only given--whatever may be the actual form education takes--from the whole downwards to the parts (Journals, 120).

My tentative definition of "inscape" is based strictly on Hopkins' early writings about aesthetics which prepared the ground for the concept. It therefore leaves out "inscape's" supernatural connotations as well as its extension into poetic formal theories. What follows may sound over-scientific, but in sticking as close as possible to Hopkins' ideas one can avoid the lofty indeterminateness which permeates a good many previous descriptions.¹⁴

The "inscape" of an object of perception means:

1. (lower level: O_x, O_y, ...): the Beauty (as relation between likeness and difference) of this object resulting from a comparison of the object with similar objects (likeness) and the subsequent awareness of its unique distinctiveness (Truth) compared with these other objects (difference).
2. (higher level: O₁, O₂, ...): the Beauty and distinctiveness (Truth) of this object resulting from the unification of its constituting "inscapes" (as in 1.) into a whole defining their common nature as type.

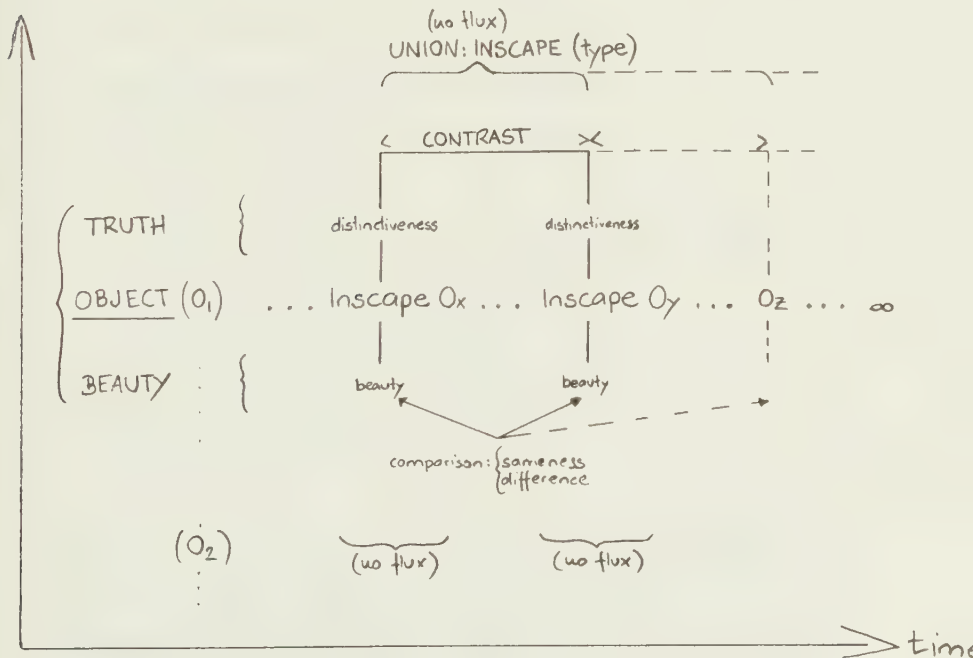
"Inscaping" as perceptive process is the apprehension and recognition of this beauty and distinctiveness.¹⁵

¹⁴ Cf. Hopkins' own remark in this context in "On the Signs of Health and Decay in the Arts": "It is impossible to apply science so exact to the arts of painting and still less of poetry as we do to those of music and architecture, but some scientific basis of aesthetical criticism is absolutely needed" (Journals, 75).

¹⁵ The subsequent diagram 2 is thought to illustrate the in-

To the extent that Hopkins shows some concern about the current philosophies' (Hegelianism and Positivism) attempts to detach metaphysics from philosophy and the difficulties they encounter in explaining the relationship between sensory impressions and objective reality, the new "Realism" in the form of "inscape" is certainly his answer to these failures.¹⁶ I

tricate relationships and interactions that make up Hopkins' notion of "inscape":



¹⁶ Cf. "Material explanation cannot be refined into explaining thought ..." (Journals, 118). Hopkins opposed the positivists because they argued that only the knowledge of phenomena was possible, not their source or ultimate purpose; this view made metaphysics obsolete.

will deal with the metaphysical quality of "inscape" in a later chapter. However, the importance of sensory impressions in Hopkins' work deserves an immediate closer look. Hopkins' experience of nature occurs through all the senses, but the eyes, above all, make possible precise and clear observation.

The bluebells in your hand baffle you with their inscape, made to every sense: [...] But this is easy, it is the eye they baffle (Journals, 209).

Consequently, the eyes as the receptors through which most sense impressions are assimilated, represent the most important human organ.¹⁷ In all his interest in the process of perception, in his extreme sensitivity to his environment, and finally in his preoccupation with nature as subject of writing and drawing, Hopkins was a child of his age, combining a conservative romantic return to sensation with a realistic immediacy and distinctive clarity of vision.

Besides "inscape", its fellow notion "in-stress", also mentioned in the notes on Parmenides for the first time, is of equally paramount importance in Hopkins' concept of perception. It is much harder, though, to come

¹⁷ The prominence of the visual sense was, of course, no Hopkinsian 'invention'. With the rise of the natural sciences in the 19th century, attention was focussed again upon sensory perception in general and visual perception in particular. These perceptive processes represented a gradual unfolding of the Neoclassic idea of the predominance of the eye among the senses, an attitude which had its roots in the Renaissance. In the Romantic period, however, acoustic impressions were being granted an equivalent status. The eye and the ear got the same attention. This equivocal view of the two main realms of the senses is reflected in Hopkins' continuing confrontation (and reunion) of sound and sight, his seeming preference of the rhythmic form of the poem as heard when read aloud: "Poetry is speech framed for contemplation of the mind by the way of hearing or speech framed to be heard for its own sake and interest even over and above its interest of meaning" (Journals, 289).

to grips with "instress", because it is used in a bewildering variety of contexts throughout Hopkins' writings. Generally, scholars regard it as the energy that upholds an object's "inscape"; it is "the flush and foredrawn" (Journals, 127) or the "unifying force" as opposed to the "unifying pattern" of "inscape".¹⁸ A second and more important widely acknowledged definition of "instress" explains it as the force "inscape" exerts on the mind or feelings of the observer. This force stands for the quality in a thing which brings about a state of stress or of act in the beholder: "...I have been in this mood and felt the depth of an instress ..." (Journals, 127). "Instress", by having its origin in the thing itself, is strongly connected with the observer's personal and emotional response while "inscaping" the object.

Bluebells in Hodder wood, all hanging their heads
one way. I caught as well as I could ... the lovely
/ what people call / 'gracious' bidding one to another
or all one way, the level or stage or shire
of colour they make hanging in the air a foot above
the grass, and a notable glare the eye may abstract
and sever from the blue colour / of light beating
up from so many glassy heads, which like water is
good to float their deeper instress in upon the
mind (Journals, 231).

To put it very simply, we can conceive of "inscape" and "instress" as two opposing and counterbalanced movements within the complicated interactions of the perception process. "In-scape" goes from subject to object, "instress" from object to subject. This concept is very similar to that Greek thought (above all Plato) which assigns sensible properties to subject and object both of which send out waves within a carry-

¹⁸ Jerome Bump, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Boston, 1982, 37

ing medium. As is evident from his unpublished commentary on Plato's Theatetus, Hopkins was familiar with the Greek system of sensation; but whether he had it in mind or not when he thought about "inscape" and "instress" is open to discussion. In any case, what can be said with certainty is that object and onlooker are in a very close, almost physical relationship in the "inscaping" act of perception, a fact which is stressed by Hopkins' recurring use of appropriate verbs referring to the visual sense: "I caught this morning morning's minion" ("The Windhover", Poems, 73). "Inscaping" and "instress", for this reason, take on a capacity not only to account for the connection between sensory impressions and objective reality, but also to render manifest and give evidence of the beholder's own existence.

Unlike Descartes, whose philosophy starts out from a radical doubt of what is taken in through the senses, for Hopkins, reality and existence of what he sees, hears, smells, tastes and touches is an unshakable conviction turning into a religious belief. Descartes, by calling everything into question, arrived at the conclusion that only his doubt, the fact that he is actually thinking, is certain: cogito ergo sum. Hopkins, by contrast, 'extends' the famous Cartesian phrase into something like: I see and understand, therefore I am. Self-existence is confirmed by the perception of existing reality outside the self, a realization which points back to the observing self by means of the close relationship between subject and object in the "inscaping"/"instressing" process. This connection is partly due to a growing interest in the particular way the subject apprehends the object compared to the mere fact of perception. In short, Hopkins' real-

ization of self-existence originates in activities of the senses and the mind and not of the mind only. Yet Hopkins, by drawing a clear distinction between consciousness and knowledge of the self, keeps ontology and epistemology on separate paths. Knowledge of the self comes through by introspection, by an "inscaping" of oneself and is therefore not associated with external phenomena:

When I compare my self, my being-myself, with anything else whatever, all things alike, all in the same degree, rebuff me with blank unlikeness; so that my knowledge of it, which is so intense, is from itself alone, they in no way help me to understand it (Sermons, 23).

The detection of "inscapes" and "instresses" in the external world, however, would always remain the powerful, aesthetic cornerstone which was to lead Hopkins (or any onlooker) to a cognitive insight into the essence of things, an insight whose degree eventually came to stand for the observer's own pitch of existence. Hopkins' later poems, for instance, demonstrate that the ability to perceive and understand the behavior of nature correctly corresponds to an "instress" that might lift the self up to the highest level of human existence, salvation:

Ah! there was a heart right!
There was single eye!
Read the unshapeable shock night¹⁹
And knew the who and the why.

The Wreck of the Deutschland,
stanza 29 (Poems, 61)

¹⁹ Cf. following chapters for a closer analysis.

3 . A MISCELLANY OF UNREST :

The Great Synthesis

on the Horizon

In contrast to Gerard Manley Hopkins' consistent unfolding of an aesthetic and ontological concept in terms of "in-scape", his early verse reveals an author whose feelings are in deep confusion about the further issues of his life. This state of unrest was primarily caused by the tense situation in religious matters at Balliol College, Oxford, when Hopkins entered to start his studies. Two major, antagonistic, Anglican streams flowed through the university in the 1860's: the Broad Church Party, on the one side, adhered to a personal interpretation of the Bible and to rational speculation in ideas based on the scientific spirit of new German scriptural scholarship; it was counteracted, on the other side, by the so-called 'Oxford Movement' of Tractarianism which tried to preserve the true Christian faith against the infidelity of Rationalism and Liberalism. There was even a third party drawing students' attention: the growing movement of the Pre-Raphaelites and related trends which made beauty the supreme end and object of life and looked at religion from a strictly aesthetic point of view. There is no doubt that the actual leaders of these groups, Dr. Pusey and Canon Liddon for the Tractarians (after they had lost Newman to Rome), Benjamin Jowett for the Broad

Churchmen, and Walter Pater for the aesthetes, endeavored time and again to convince the students of their respective ideas. Consequently, Hopkins came not only in contact with these various currents but also under their immediate spell.

We have already traced the Pre-Raphaelites' influence on Hopkins, and we have additionally seen that the rational mode of thinking made its way into his concept of "inscape" as well. Hopkins was however most attracted by the central figure of the Tractarians' religious renaissance at Oxford, who became also the central, all-embracing focus of his perception: Christ. The Bampton Lectures, given in 1865 by Hopkins' regular confessor, Canon Liddon, left a deep impression: "The Bampton, in which the most beautiful sentence I ever remember hearing of Liddon's" (Journals, 136). In these lectures whose subject was The Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Liddon tried to outline a concrete picture of Christ as the dwelling place of all divine attributes. He emphasized that the divinity of Christ is a reality comparable to the definiteness of material bodies felt and measured by the organs of sense and is not displayed in an ideal or transcendental manner. Thus the 'Oxford Movement', by putting Christ into the context of perceptible reality, could foster Hopkins' ability to see in Him the final integrating "inscape". In other words, Hopkins began to apply theological views to his own aesthetic principles by gradually giving "inscape" a religious value. This attempt to reconcile aesthetics and ethics harmonized the thoughts which were permanently haunting him in those days: on the one hand, his essays demonstrate a tendency to account for one's perception

of nature by means of the systematic order of an aesthetic concept; "inscape", in the beginning, was thought to be nothing but an aesthetic device, the love of the beautiful. Hopkins' poetry and letters written during his Oxford years, on the other hand, are full of religious doctrine, the love of God; they show a deep concern with his and fellow students' personal beliefs.¹ This desire for unity prepared the ground for Hopkins' sacramental vision of nature and his poetry of the 1870's. Union and harmony were to become the main goals of his life.

Hopkins' first efforts to make contact with Christ strove to conceive of Him as the realization of a moral ideal to which man's highest aspirations point: "To Christ I look, on Christ I call" (Poems, 26). They did not however lead him to the goal of actual unity and fulfillment on a personal level in the form of salvation. Although Hopkins' obsession with the imitation of Christ clearly has its roots in christocentric Tractarian thought, it scarcely surpasses the rather orthodox constraint to follow Christ in His physical suffering:

Pure fasted faces draw unto this feast:
God comes all sweetness to your Lenten lips.
You striped in secret with breath-taking whips,
To crosses meant for Jesu's;

"Easter Communion" (Poems, 20-1)

At Oxford, Hopkins' artistic personality was completely dominated by the manifestation of Christ's almighty power to over-

¹ Cf. above all Hopkins' letters to the Rev. E.W. Urquhart (Gerard Manley Hopkins, Further Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins, including his Correspondence with Coventry Patmore, ed. by C.C. Abbott, London, 1956, hereafter cited as Further Letters).

come contrasts and thereby create an equilibrium or union which turns sterility into fertility:

He hath abolished the old drouth,
And rivers run where all was dry,
The field is sopp'd with merciful dew.

(Poems, 18)

Such devotional lines alternate with poetry full of doubt, showing that antagonisms cannot be successfully surmounted by an individual, that is to say, by the poet. The union between heaven and earth, between Christ and man, is not achieved: "My prayers must meet a brazen heaven / And fail or scatter all away" (Poems, 27).

Hopkins' Oxford verse gives evidence of the poet's inability to connect nature, Christ, and his own self through poetic utterances. Thus, if there is ever the question of a conflict between sensualism and asceticism, as Bridges pointed out in his notes to the first edition of Hopkins' poems, it can only apply to the poetry written between 1862 and 1866. Since Hopkins was not yet able to combine aesthetic perception and religious insight, his verse lacked either one or the other. In "The Habit of Perfection" Hopkins reaches a state of absolute fulfillment by shutting out the senses from the outward world: "Be shelled, eyes, with double dark / And find the uncreated light" (Poems, 31). Yet, this attitude is as extreme and one-sided as a Keatsian indulgence in a pure physical sight in which nature does not speak to the beholder either:

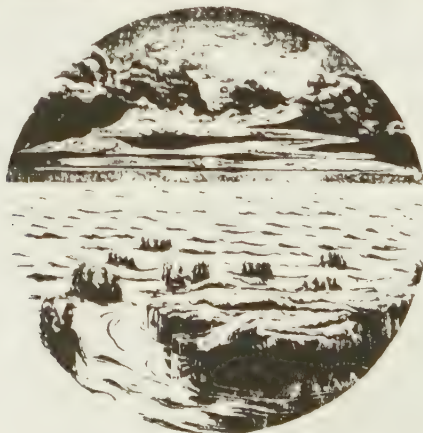
Then they [the mermaids], thus ranged, 'gan make full
 plaintively
A piteous Siren sweetness on the sea,
Withouten instrument, or conch, or bell,

Or stretch'd chords tuneable on turtle's shell;
Only with utterance of sweet breath they sung
An antique chaunt and in an unknown tongue. (emphasis
mine)

"A Vision of the Mermaids" (Poems, 11)

In both cases the poet fails to come to a real vision of being; when the senses must concentrate on the religious side only, as in "The Habit of Perfection", salvation is only found in an indefinite and distant future: "But you shall walk the golden street" (Poems, 32). The dreamy and fanciful nature of "A Vision of the Mermaids" is given a supernatural character which is far from the sacramental reality of Hopkins' later poems. It also closes with a corresponding sense of yearning and unfulfillment: "White loom'd my rock, the water gurgling o'er, / Whence oft I watch but see those Mermaids now no more" (Poems, 11).²

² Hopkins appropriately illustrated the poem with a revealing sketch: a wide vista directing the observer's eye from the unreal dream world of the playing mermaids in the foreground to the distant horizon where the sea and the sky finally meet and dark thunderclouds portend an uncertain future (from Graham Storey, A Preface to Hopkins, Harlow, 1981, 13):



Hopkins' early diaries show a fascination with distances, always associated with the color blue.³ For Hopkins, the color blue was not to stand for the natural hue of the skies exclusively, but was also raised to a higher level of metaphorical meaning: the heaven of salvation and resurrection. It is therefore suggestive that "distances" disappear from Hopkins' notes once he had reached the level of present revelation.⁴ Hopkins' undergraduate verse, by contrast, continually expresses the separation of man from God and its own incapacity to bridge this gap poetically.⁵

A positive encounter with God remains an unfulfilled desire and is transferred into the distance of a time to come. Images of solitude, isolation, and the failure of communication are therefore supplementary keynotes: Lovers cannot come together; they meet "the stabbing coldness of rebuff" because "Bad Saturn with a swart aspect / fronts Venus" ("The Lover's Stars", Poems, 126). They are separated or locked out from each other: "You should have been with me as near / As halves of sweet-pea-blossoms are" and not reunited until after death at the Last Judgement: "The angel

³ Cf. Journals, 135, 149, 168

⁴ Cf. next chapter

⁵ The fact that Hopkins left so many poems unfinished during these years (compared to a relatively small amount in the 1870's and 1880's) is an interesting case in point. Apparently he considered poetry not (yet) capable of executing the great synthesis which fuses oppositions, like that between heaven and earth, within an all-encompassing visionary effort. On the contrary, the continuation of Richard Garnett's "The Nix" takes up an essentially finished poem and transforms it into an unresolved mental struggle (Poems, 163-4).

lifted us above. / The bitterness of Death was past, / My
love; and all was sweet and well" ("A Voice from the World",
Poems, 124). Consummated love as an expression of fulfillment
in union is not possible in the actual moment of utterance:
togetherness is out of reach, a "far-off promise of a time
to be" (Poems, 22):

Love I was shewn upon the mountain-side
And bid to catch Him ere the drop of day.
See, Love, I creep and Thou on wings dost ride:
Love, it is evening now and Thou away;
Love, it grows darker here and Thou art above;
Love, come down to me if Thy name be Love.

"The Half-way House" (Poems, 28)

It is worth noticing here that the desire for union with Christ
as Love personified is substantially displayed along the ver-
tical axis. The meeting of the I and his "Love" would be equi-
valent to a unification of earth and heaven. The rhyme of
"Love" and "above" which occurs several times in Hopkins'
early poetry but never after 1875 is an excellent case in
point to demonstrate that the union of contrasts would not
only be understood as a spiritual vision unifying heaven and
earth but as a concrete meeting in mid-air.

Moreover, Hopkins elucidates the momen-
tary impossibility of uniting contrasting elements by means
of the appropriate alchemist figure whose too stagnant and
alienated inner nature is contrasted with the purposeful change
of the outward world. Still more allusive however is the al-
chemist's constant object of transforming lead into gold, an
endeavor whose futility is obvious to the persona: "And then
I hate the most that lore / That holds no promise of success"
("The Alchemist in the City", Poems, 25). What the alchemist
lacks in order to complete the transmutation of metals, or

what Hopkins the poet lacks (to turn alchemy's metaphor into a Christian one) in order to come to the real vision of things, is a catalyst. Whereas the alchemist seeks in vain for the imaginary philosopher's stone or the notorious elixir, Hopkins approaches the conviction that only the conversion to the Catholic faith will provide him with the urgently needed catalyst:

God exercises his mastery and dominion over his creatures' wills in two ways--over the affective will by simply determining it so or so ...; over the arbitrium or power of pitch by shifting the creature from one pitch contrary to God's will to another which is according to it or from the less to the more so. [...] The first is a change worked by God of something in man; the second an exchange of one whole for another whole, as they say in the mystery of Transubstantiation, a conversion of a whole substance into another whole substance, ... (Sermons, 151).

This transubstantiation, real presence, or synthesis, however cannot be achieved yet. Nondum, the title word of one of Hopkins' Oxford poems, hovers like a bad omen above all of his early verse:

God, though to Thee our psalm we raise
No answering voice comes from the skies;
To Thee the trembling sinner prays
But no forgiving voice replies;
Our prayer seems lost in desert ways,
Our hymn in the vast silence dies.

"Nondum" (Poems, 32)

The poet is not able to make full contact with the divine; his reaching out to the heavens is met with cold rejection; he does not yet understand the mystery of God's and Christ's revelation.⁶

⁶ Cf. Matthew 16,9: "Where is your faith? Do you not understand even yet?"

What is especially striking about "Nondum" is that the awareness of the not yet with its ensuing situation of exile and self-enclosure leads to the silence of poetical impotence and death:

My hand upon my lips I lay;
The breast's desponding sob I quell;
I move along life's tomb-decked way
And listen to the passing bell
Summoning men from speechless day
To death's more silent, darker spell.

"Nondum" (Poems, 33)

The poet's incapacity to love thwarts every creative impulse.

Trees by their yield
Are known; but I--
My sap is sealed,
My root is dry.
If life within
I none can shew
(Except for sin),
Nor fruit above,--
It must be so--
I do not love.

(Poems, 169)⁷

Hopkins himself had characterized love as the moving power of poetry (Letters to Bridges, 66). Its absence was bound to give rise to a state of poetic barrenness and self-denial which resembles his spiritual crises in the 'sonnets of desolation' twenty years later. The Oxford poetry of 1865 and the verse written in Dublin in 1885 have much in common indeed. Beside the protagonists' loneliness and solitude there is the

⁷ The sexual image of the tree that is not able to procreate signifies a lack of personal creativity and implies the infeasibility of an imitation of Christ: "On Easter morn the Tree was forth, / In forty days reach'd Heaven from earth" ("Barnfloor and Winepress", Poems, 17).

attraction exerted by physical suffering and the almost unutterable fear of moving away from one's love, i.e. falling. A comparison between a stanza from "Nondum" and a fragment from "No worst" demonstrates this parallelism very well:

And still th' abysses infinite
Surround the peak from which we gaze.
Deep calls to deep, and blackest night
Giddies the soul with blinding daze
That dares to cast its searching sight
On being's dread and vacant maze.

(Poems, 33)

O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall
Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them cheap
May who ne'er hung there. Nor does long our small
Durance deal with that steep or deep.

(Poems, 100)

The main similarity however is the poet's implied regard of self-chosen silence as the means to reach a final synthesis of spiritual fulfillment: "Elected Silence, sing to me ..."
("The Habit of Perfection", Poems, 31).⁸

Thus we have to see Hopkins' burning of his own poems, the "slaughter of the innocents" as he called it (Journals, 165), from two different angles. The first widely-acknowledged opinion about this sacrifice is that writing poetry would not have suited his new profession of Jesuit priest. At his friend Robert Bridges' request to send a recently written poem for revision, Hopkins replied: "I cannot send my "Summa" for it is burnt with my other verses: I saw they wd. interfere with my state and vocation" (Letters

⁸ In the last chapter which deals with Hopkins' Dublin poetry I will come back to the problematics of silence and poetic creation from the point of view of the opposition between imitation and originality.

to Bridges, 24). This detachment from and seeming indifference to the writing of poetry is as evident as it is superficial because, in spite of (or due to!) Jesuit doctrine, poetry and the deep desire to write remained a perennial concern which was to find its catharsis in The Wreck of the Deutschland. The reason for the poems' destruction lies rather in their inadequacy, in the poet's judgement of their not properly expressing the unifying vision of belief which he was to gain through his conversion and pledge to the priesthood. Hopkins' poetry, so far, had celebrated union without really achieving it, had adored knowledge without possessing it. Neither the poems' repeatedly unfinished form nor their imaginative and over-prophetic content could satisfy an author who sought for a final synthesis both as an artist and priest. In short, when poetry becomes imaginative speculation packed with "shall" and "will" and wistful gazes into the distance like the alchemist's "I ... / Then find in the horizon-round / One spot and hunger to be there" (Poems, 25), it is devaluated. The poet is expected to deny his own verses if they turn out to represent only the far away possibility of a synthesis instead of the actual union itself.⁹

The otherwise not very spectacular "Epic" of Tennyson's "Morte d'Arthur" tells of a similar reason to burn one's poetry. Tennyson's poet explains that he destroyed his epic because the genre did not fit any more into modern times: "Why should any

⁹ It must be noted that I use imagination in a specifically Hopkinsian sense, that is to say, with its meaning of memory "towards things future or things unknown or imaginary" (Sermons, 174).

man / Remode Models?"¹⁰ Although this author argues from a merely poetic point of view, there is something relating his decision to Hopkins': good poetry must be an expression of an actuality which ought not to lose its value of the instantaneous.

Hopkins' attitude towards the writing or not writing of poetry generally remained an ambiguous one. Although he gives the sacrifice of his poems the touch of finality, he simultaneously admits that he kept "corrected copies of some things" (Letters to Bridges, 24). The idea that artistic creation could help him in some way to establish a dialogue with Christ/God is always at the forefront of his mind. More than once he entertains hopes that he will be able to keep on writing even as a priest:

¹⁰ Alfred Lord Tennyson, The Poetical Works, ed. by G. Robert Stange, Boston, 1974 (hereafter cited as Tennyson), 63. Above all in his younger years Hopkins was an avid reader of Tennyson. And although he soon began to doubt the latter's God-like authority ("a horrible thing has happened to me, I have begun to doubt Tennyson", Further Letters, 215), Hopkins frequently commented on Tennyson's poetry and used it as basis for many comparisons throughout his critical correspondence with Bridges and Dixon: "Come what may he will be one of our greatest poets" (Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Correspondence of Gerard Manley Hopkins and Richard Watson Dixon, ed. by C.C. Abbott, London, 1970 (hereafter cited as Correspondence with Dixon), 24. Tennyson remained a permanent, conscious influence: "I think one had got into the way of thinking, or had not got out of the way of thinking, that Tennyson was always new, touching, beyond other poets, not pressed with human ailments, never using Parnassian; he is, one must see it, what we used to call Tennysonian. But the discovery of this must not make too much difference. When puzzled by one's doubts it is well to turn to a passage like this. Surely your maturest judgement will never be fooled out of saying that this is divine, terribly beautiful--the stanza of In Memoriam beginning with the quatrain ..." (Further Letters, 219).

I want to write still and as a priest I very likely can do that too, not so freely as I shd. have liked, e.g. nothing or little in the verse way, but no doubt what wd. best serve the cause of my religion (Further Letters, 231).

This continuing desire to create, to depict reality and truth, is a concomitant to Hopkins' conviction that the final revelation of being, the apprehension of the great synthesis, or again knowledge and spiritual insight, will be effected through the senses. The perception of the outward world will eventually lead to the real vision of things. Hopkins' early poetry sets forth this attitude by putting focus on the protagonists' look into the distance and their settling for visual freedom. Hopkins' destroying of his verse is therefore not an abnegation of his love of beauty and his own fine sensitivity. Quite on the contrary, the poems did not meet the heavy demands Hopkins made on them as far as beauty was concerned: they were not beautiful in themselves because they failed to represent beauty's being; like natural "in-scapes", his poems would have to accomplish not only the aesthetic union of sameness and difference but also the spiritual union of heaven and earth.¹¹

This argument proves true when one considers the emphasis Hopkins laid on the visibility of church and creed; the doctrine of the 'Real Presence' of God in the Eucharist became the central instance and archetype for a sacramental poetry of nature and thus triggered his conversion.

But I may for once speak, as far as I am competent to understand them [the developments of the Catholic principle] and, having recognised them--in a

¹¹ Cf. chapters 4 and 5 for more details.

conscious and deliberate shape-- ..., of the difference the apprehension of the Catholic truths one after another makes in one's views of everything (emphasis mine), beyond all others those of course of the blessed sacrament of the altar. You will no doubt understand what I mean by saying that the sordidness of things, wh. one is compelled perpetually to feel, is perhaps, ..., the most unmixedly painful thing one knows of: and this is (objectively) intensified and (subjectively) destroyed by Catholicism (Further Letters, 226-7).

Although the adoption of the Catholic faith does not make any change in the outer world, it transforms the believer's view of it; the new faith gives him principles on which to establish a satisfactory relation between mortal and immortal beauty, between heaven and earth. It thereby lifts him up to a state of grace, a pitch of selfhood. In fact, the resolution which--judging from his notebooks and letters--he built up to step by step but finally made "all in a minute" (Further Letters, 27), plunged Hopkins into a state of happiness which he "could not have conceived" (Letters to Bridges, 6). This feeling is enhanced even by the decision to join the Jesuits whose purposefulness of mission attracted him in particular: "Since I made up my mind to this [becoming a Jesuit] I have enjoyed the first complete peace of mind I have ever had" (Further Letters, 51). Hopkins' development from his earliest Anglican days at Oxford up to the spiritual climax of his conversion and taking orders can be compared with a natural object's running through different "inscapes" allowing the onlooker to apprehend its final essence. Just as aesthetic "inscape" unites the contrasts of sameness and difference, the conversion as "inscape" of the self made Hopkins solve and understand the

mysteries and paradoxes of Christianity.¹²

The final essence of Hopkins' self, then, was reached by the unifying force of a moral commitment which put an end to his restlessness and self-division, at least for the time being, and found its outward equivalent in his reception into the Catholic Church by Newman in 1866 and his entering the Jesuit novitiate at Roehampton in 1868. One can suggest that the determination to become a Catholic and a Jesuit represented the two major decisions of Hopkins' life: they both result in fixed "inscapes" causing a feeling of exultation and peace of mind.

"Heaven-Haven", written in 1864, gives a closer description of this state of bliss, although again in the longing and wistful manner so characteristic of the Oxford poetry:

I have desired to go
Where springs not fail,
To fields where flies no sharp and sided hail
And a few lilies blow.

And I have asked to be
Where no storms come,
Where the green swell is in the havens dumb,
And out of the swing of the sea.

(Poems, 19)

At first sight, this beautifully condensed and often underrated poem offers just another aspect of the persona's desire to transcend an unstable, unreliable, and hostile world and to be removed to a peaceful place "in the daylight divine" ("Rosa Mystica", Poems, 38-40). This longing for peace outside the normal world is clearly connected to a wish for death, which reveals another analogy to the sad, 'terrible'

¹² Probably all of the central Christian mysteries are paradoxes.

sonnets of 1885. Although, in some way, the decision to join the Jesuit order can be considered a step out of this world already, a death wish is even put more en evidence if one regards the poem as an echo from Tennyson's "Morte d'Arthur", when the fatally-wounded hero sets out for his last voyage:

I am going a long way

[..]

To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly, but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.

(Tennyson, 67)

We have seen that Hopkins' search for rest and his look into the distance are paralleled by the poem's growing silence because the work of art cannot bring forth and does not itself represent this state of happiness. The stillness of the sea in the afterworld reflects the poem's own muteness. Yet this state of eternal joy in silence is far from being realized. The use of the present perfect in "I have desired" and "I have asked" is a case in point. The yearning persists into the present and future and betrays the speaker's constant restlessness:

But the uncertainty I am **in** about the future is so very unpleasant and so breaks my power of applying to anything that I am resolved to end it, which I shall do by going into a retreat at Easter at the latest and deciding whether I have a vocation to the priesthood (Letters to Bridges, 22).

What makes "Heaven-Haven" so special among Hopkins' early verse is its telling ambiguity. These eight lines, to begin

with, express their maker's unrest and foreshadow his upcoming spiritual resolutions, with their positive effects, and, at the same time, disclose the poet's underlying urge to create which, as has already been mentioned, could by no means be disposed of by his conversion. In order to perceive this double meaning more easily, one has to study "Heaven-Haven's" sequel poem, "I must hunt down the prize", which unfortunately is listed separately, although the two poems unmistakably belong together.¹³

I must hunt down the prize
Where my heart lists.
Must see the eagle's bulk, render'd in mists,
Hang of a treble size.
Must see the waters roll
Where the seas set
Towards wastes where round the ice-blocks tilt
and fret
Not so far from the pole.

(Poems, 128)

The reader of these lines is struck by the poet's dependence on visual and acoustic perception. The writer cannot believe what he cannot see; insight presupposes sight:

Hear yet my paradox: Love, when all is given,
To see Thee I must see Thee, to love, love;
I must o'ertake Thee at once and under heaven
If I shall overtake Thee at last above.
You have your wish; enter these walls, one said:
He is with you in the breaking of the bread.

"The Half-way House" (Poems, 29)

¹³ For mysterious reasons the Gardner/MacKenzie editions consider "I must hunt down the prize" an unfinished fragment in spite of the joint appearance of the first drafts of this poem and "Heaven-Haven" in the notebooks (Journals, 33). Apparently the importance of the poem's deliberately set contrast was constantly underestimated by critics and reviewers. The fact that Hopkins left "I must hunt down the prize" with a variant for the second quatrain does not allow of a separation of these twin poems.

"I must hunt down the prize" implies that the further the limits of perception are extended the more complete, all-embracing, and perfect is the objects' visual union in Christ. Sight which reaches out to the extremes of the cardinal points and thus embodies the heights of the soaring eagle, the depths of the rolling seas and, horizontally, everything lying between the poles, becomes a vision of the world, a Weltanschauung constituted by the totality of perceptible and often contrasting "inscapes" which are united and dominated by the final and eternal natura communis of Christ. Hopkins' spiritual growth is therefore less a withdrawal into a world of passive and sober temperateness and poetical silence than an approach to active and perceptive ecstasy and appropriate artistic creation.¹⁴

"Heaven-Haven" is more subtle than "I must hunt down the prize" in alluding to this undercurrent of meaning. The rhythm as well as the typographical setting of the poem on the page contradict its meaning in context. First, the rhythm of the poem sticks firmly to a regular iambic meter without any variation. It thus mirrors the idea of rest, peace, and death very well. The last line of the first stanza, however, brings about a first breakage since it must be scanned "And a ¹few ¹lilies ¹blow." The renewed attempt at an iambic pattern in the second quatrain is followed by an even earlier change of rhythm; whereas the metrically dubious line six allows of different scannings, only the last

¹⁴ "Heaven-Haven's" subtitle, "A nun takes the veil", must be interpreted accordingly. The nun not only takes the veil to shut herself up in a cloister but also takes the veil away from things, unveils them in order to make them visible and accessible.

three feet of line seven and the first of line eight are iambic. The poem closes with two anapests: "And out of the swing of the sea." The poem's repeated drive away from the original iambic pattern, an urge which climaxes in the final two feet, leaves an equivocal impression in the reader about the poet's real intentions. The rhythm of the final line is all else than "out of the swing of the sea" and thus gives the expression of the persona's desire a new, contrary, aspect. There is no other Hopkins poem written in this period which would experiment to such an extent with variable line length. In "Heaven-Haven", Hopkins seems to have broken in two the first line of a heroic couplet in order to form the opening lines of each quatrain. The resulting shape of the two stanzas, including the respective closing lines as a kind of 'couplet-coda', anticipates the stanza pattern of The Wreck of the Deutschland among other later poems. The distortion of one of the smoothest and most favored English verse forms of, above all, the 18th century does not stand for a desire to bring poetic creation to an end, but, quite the contrary, unveils the will to set out to new horizons of originality in a poetry which is well aware of its past:

He hath put a new song in my mouth,
The words are old, the purport new.

(Poems, 18)

4 . ETHICAL "INSCAPE" :

The Union of Contrasts

A water "inscape" in Gerard Manley Hopkins' diary (August 13, 1874) reads as follows:

The leaps of running foam striking the sea wall double on themselves and return in nearly the same order and shape in which they came. This is mechanical reflection and is the same as optical; indeed all nature is mechanical, but then it is not seen that mechanics contain that which is beyond mechanics (Journals, 252, emphasis mine).

This note reveals an attitude towards nature different from that ~~expressed~~ before 1870. In this year Hopkins linked his passion for "inscape" with the apprehension of divine design in nature for the first time: "I do not think I have ever seen anything more beautiful than the bluebell I have been looking at. I know the beauty of our Lord by it" (Journals, 199). Hopkins had been undergoing a metamorphosis that fundamentally changed his perception of nature. The increase and deepening in his grasp of "inscape" consisted of nature impressions taking on a religious turn of one kind or another. The perceptive emphasis changed from the purely aesthetic, almost scientific fusion of sameness and difference, such as in pied or dappled things, to the spiritual power, the final type behind creation. The experience of particular objects and "inscapes" leads man to God, the One who may be found in the Many.¹

¹ Since Hopkins had already framed the main points of refer-

Although Hopkins' enthusiasm for dappled things is an unfolding of his aesthetic ideas of sameness and difference combined in the same object or several objects, piedness does not strike the poet only as externally beautiful unity-in-variety. Such differences, either displayed in time ("swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim"), or space ("skies of couple-colour") are now to provoke a deep response, an "instress", in the observer's heart in the form of praise.

"Pied Beauty"

Glory be to God for dappled things--

For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;

For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;

Landscape plotted and pieced--fold, fallow, and plough;

And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;

Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)

With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;

He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:

Praise him.

(Poems, 69-70)

This "curtal" sonnet demonstrates that Hopkins' new perception of reality found its strongest expression in poetical rhythms. After the long silence between 1868 and 1875 his fresh breaking into verse in St. Beuno, Wales, where he went in August 1874 for his theological studies, overcomes the hypothetical and abstract attempts at union in his Oxford poems. Just as the beginning and the end of "Pied Beauty", the glory and the praise, embrace with the arms of spirituality the rest of the poem, i.e. nature as the object, and God's immanence as the reason for worship and devotion, the

ence for this viewpoint in his Oxonian aesthetic theory, he must be considered an unfolding poet, not a developing one. This is an evolution in depth, not in width.

infinite defines the scope of Hopkins' new and unifying vision of the world and of his conception of art. His early statement in "The Origin of Our Moral Ideas" that "all thought is of course in a sense an effort at unity" (Journals, 83) is realized in his own ideas and writings by bringing together the material and spiritual in an universal pattern.²

As we drove home the stars came out thick: I leant back to look at them and my heart opening more than usual praised our Lord to and in whom all that beauty comes home (Journals, 254).

"Inscaping" and "instressing" thus bridge the gap between the transient and the permanent. Hopkins deepens the Ruskinesque attitudes of his early diaries in which he is most concerned with the precise delineation of forms and the truthful description of colors: he overcomes the self-sufficient aestheticism of the Pre-Raphaelites and sees natural beauty as a

² Cf. also from an unpublished Oxford essay: "The multiplicity of ends converges in one end. [...] Besides the multiplicity and convergence, actions must not be infinite, or in other words they really must converge" (quoted in: James Finn Cotter, Inscape: The Christology and Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins, Pittsburgh, 1972, 24). Even such a poem as "Tom's Garland" (Poems, 103) which was written late in Hopkins' life and does not have anything to do with his attitude towards nature, brings to light the poet's everlasting wish for unity-in-diversity. The common weal of society is hinged on the smooth cooperation of all individual members; the harmony of all distinctive parts makes up the whole. Hopkins had to explain this rather difficult, let alone obscure, poem to his friend Bridges: "The commonwealth or well ordered human society is like one man; a body with many members and each its function; some higher, some lower, but all honourable, from the honour which belongs to the whole" (Letters to Bridges, 272-3).

sign of divine beauty.³

With the recognition of this ethical function of "inscape" the observer also begins to understand its full metaphysical significance, the beauty within:

It is certain that in nature outward beauty is the proof of inward beauty outward good of inward good. Fineness, proportion, offeature comes from a moulding force which succeeds in asserting itself over the resistance of cumbersome or restraining matter; the bloom of health comes from the abundance of life, the great vitality within (Further Letters, 306-7).

Hopkins conceives of nature as a world which unifies objects or sets of objects because it reflects the ultimate unity of a transcendent oneness and not the separateness of things or their fragments.⁴ Hopkins' perfection of "inscape", then, determined the individual's way of relating to reality by transferring it into a realm of ideal and definite intention as well as primal and fundamental law where nothing occurs at random:

All the world is full of inscape and chance left
free to act falls into an order as well as purpose:

³ What a difference from Ruskin's response on seeing the Alps for the first time: "But for me, the Alps and their people were alike beautiful in their snow and their humanity; and I wanted, neither for them nor myself, sight of any thrones in heaven but the rocks, or of any spirits in heaven but the clouds" (John Ruskin, Praeterita, London, 1949, 103).

⁴ Earlier, the unity of the whole was already important to Hopkins' contemplation but would not aim at more than a small unit, such as a piece of music, and finally retire behind its parts: "..., for even in the successive arts as music, for full enjoyment, the synthesis of the succession should give, unlock, the contemplative enjoyment of the unity of the whole. It is however true that in the successive arts with their greater complexity and length the whole's unity retires, is less important, serves rather for the framework of that of the parts" (Journals, 126).

looking out of my window I caught it in the random clods and broken heaps of snow made by the cast of a broom (Journals, 230).

The fusion of the sensuous and the religious was presumably at the root of Hopkins' conversion but the latter, at the same time, spurred and encouraged this kind of perception, which is rightly called sacramental, because, in Christian theology, a sacrament is understood to be an outward sign of an interior spiritual reality. The world thereby becomes both substance and symbol, assumes form as well as meaning. This is why I refer to aesthetic "inscape" as the formal aspect of "inscape", exterior shape, and to ethical "inscape" as the semantic aspect of "inscape". "Inscape" unites the exterior and the interior aspects of a thing, its form and its meaning. These two essential parts are reconciled by the poet's visionary imagination. Sacramental vision or intuitive insight are nevertheless expressions preferable to imagination; for, as the previous chapter has shown, imagination sets forth a desire and points towards the future: "Gerard Manley Hopkins' theory of the affective will, and indeed his whole outlook as a poet", Christopher Devlin wrote in his notes to the spiritual writings, "made it necessary for him to hold that the imagination expresses the longings of the spirit as well as those of the body" (Sermons, 310). Hopkins' spiritualized vision of nature, in turn, by which the seer discovers in natural perfection a spiritual ideal aimed at the here-and-now and can therefore be more realistically equated with what the Romantics called imagination:⁵ the Romantic poet's imagination attempts to establish a relation or com-

⁵ See next chapter for a final note on imagination.

munication between God and man by means of the discovery of hitherto unapprehended symbols in nature and their transformation into poetry. The Romantics were equally committed to a consistently irrational-affective and metaphysical experience of natural phenomena. God's immanence in nature was based upon an imaginative assimilation of intense personal cognition. Above all Wordsworth and Coleridge articulated out of their new subjective religious spontaneity a fresh vision of harmony and order:

And the conclusion is that a scheme of the Christian faith which does not arise of, and shoot its beams downward into, the scheme of nature, but stands aloof as an insulated afterthought, must be false or distorted in all its particulars.⁶

⁶ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, The Complete Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, New York, 1856, 113).

Cf. also passages from the "Hymn before Sun-Rise, in the Vale of Chamouni" in which Coleridge's sacramental vision, like Hopkins', unites the keenly observed diversity in nature. He takes a position on the character of faith which can be regarded as a precursor of the Oxford movement:

O dread and silent Mount! I gazed upon thee,
Till thou, still present to the bodily sense,
Didst vanish from my thought: entranced in prayer
I worshipp'd the Invisible alone.

[...]

Torrents, methinks, that heard a mighty voice,
And stopped at once amid their maddest plunge!
Motionless torrents! silent cataracts!
Who made you glorious as the Gates of Heaven
Beneath the keen full moon? Who bade the sun
Clothe you with rainbows? Who, with living flowers
Of loveliest blue, spread garlands at your feet?--
God! let the torrents, like a shout of nations,
Answer! and let the ice-plains echo, God!
God! sing ye meadow-streams with gladsome voice!
Ye pine-groves, with your soft and soul-like sounds!
And they too have a voice, yon piles of snow,
And in their perilous fall shall thunder, God!

[...]

Thou dread ambassador from Earth to Heaven,
Great Hierarch! tell thou the silent sky,
And tell the stars, and tell yon rising sun
Earth, with her thousand voices, praises God.

(Samuel Taylor Coleridge, The Complete Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Vol. I, Oxford, 1957 (hereafter cited as Coleridge), 376-80).

Such a vision was brought forth by the synthetical and magical power of the imagination. In the Biographia Literaria Coleridge describes the imagination as being able to bring about the fusion of the human faculties. Thus Romantic imagination possesses a unifying energy leading to a similar vision of the essence of things as "inscape"/"instress". Both concepts depend on the individual meditative perceiver in nature who appears as persona inherent in an appropriately emotional poetry, and both concepts reconcile a series of polarities: being and nothingness, descent and ascent, heaven and earth. Moreover Hopkinsian "inscape" and Romantic imagination share a common imagery in the form of skies, stars, clouds, wind, water, dawn, sunset, and last not least, birds. In order to understand the originality and special implications of Hopkins' vision of the world, however, we have to consider in what way he surpasses the old Christian affirmation of drawing together faith and nature as manifestation of God's presence as Christ Incarnate as well as how he additionally overcomes the new interpretation of this tradition by the Romantic consciousness.

If we look at the histories of literature and ideas, the notion of resituating symbol in physical fact is frequent and not very spectacular indeed. It can be traced back to the Presocratic philosophers, such as Parmenides and Heraclitus, and Plato, with whom Hopkins' philosophic preferences always belonged. Plato's idealism, the "new Realism" by which every set form in nature derived from an ideal reality, appealed to Hopkins and his notion of "inscape". The way, then, in which he diagrammed the Platonic scheme of ideas in his notebook bears a striking similarity to his own structure of being

displayed in chapter 2.⁷ The reading of nature in a more restricted, exemplary, Christian sense was practised throughout the history of Western civilization as it was propagated in the Old Testament:

The heavens tell out the glory of God,
the vault of heaven reveals his handiwork.

Psalm 19

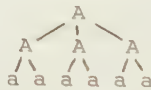
or in the New Testament:

For all that may be known of God by men lies plain before their eyes; indeed God himself has disclosed it to them. His invisible attributes, that is to say his everlasting power and deity, have been visible ever since the world began, to the eye of reason, in the things he has made.

Romans 1/19-20

This sacramental vision of nature found expression not only in the daily re-enactment of Christ's incarnation on all the altars of Christendom, but also in the writings of hosts of poets who translated the Book of Nature into verse, transformed the Word into the word.⁸

⁷ Diagram 1:



The Idea of Good
Intermediate Ideas
phenomena

Hopkins commented on the idea of "good" that it was not used in our sense, but in the sense "in which an idea can be good in relation to phenomena--rather to be translated Idea of the existent, knowable, perfect" ("Plato's Philosophy", unpubl. Oxford notebook, quoted in: Thomas A. Zanniello, "The Tonic of Platonism", Hopkins Quarterly 5, 1978, 11).

⁸ Modern poetry, too, may center upon the mystery incarnate in nonhuman life, a sacramental quality in the poet's response to nature which assumes the presence of spirit in matter and seeks to make the transcendent immanent. The poetry of Wendell Berry is a convincing case in point.

It seems to be rather difficult for Milton to achieve a supernatural vision of reality: Adam's and Eve's prayer thus anticipates the impending Fall:

Unspeakable, who sitt'st above these Heavens
To us invisible or dimly seen
In these thy lowest works, yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond thought, and Power Divine.

Paradise Lost V/156-9⁹

After they have yielded to Satan's temptation, however, God is still immanent in His own creation. Thus Milton, full of hope, foreshadows Hopkins' "The world is charged with the grandeur of God" (Poems, 66):

Yet doubt not but in Valley and in Plain
God is as here, and will be found alike
Present, and of his presence many a sign
Still following thee, still compassing thee round
With goodness and paternal Love, his Face
Express, and of his steps the track Divine.

Paradise Lost XI/349-54 (Milton, 307)

Browning's "Bishop Blougram's Apology", by contrast, shuts the Book of Nature and thus prevents any theological reading:

Some think, Creation's meant to show him forth:
I say it's meant to hide him all it can,
And that's what all the blessed evil's for.

652-4¹⁰

Yet it would be misleading to conclude from this statement that Browning was an atheist; for the personae in his dramat-

⁹ John Milton, Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained, New York, 1982, (hereafter cited as Milton), 153-4

¹⁰ Robert Browning, The Poems, New Haven, 1981, (hereafter cited as Browning), 633

ic monologues express different viewpoints.

I but open my eyes,--and perfection, no more and no less,
In the kind I imagined, full-fronts me, and God is seen God
In the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the soul and the cloud
And thus looking within and around me, I ever renew
(With that stoop of the soul which in bending upraises it too)
The submission of man's nothing-perfect to God's all-complete,
As by each new obeisance in spirit, I climb to his feet.

"Saul" 248-54 (Browning, 698)

Even for Coleridge the Book of Nature could become unreadable and unintelligible; the Book of God as it is manifested in nature is being remaindered:

"Coeli Enarrant"

The stars that wont to start, as on a chace
Mid twinkling insult on Heaven's darken'd face,
Like a conven'd conspiracy of spies
Wink at each other with confiding eyes!
Turn from the portent--all is blank on high,
No constellations alphabet the sky:
The Heavens one large Black Letter only shew,
And as a child beneath its master's blow
Shrills out at once its task and its affright--
The groaning world now learns to read aright,
And with its Voice of Voices cries out, O!

(Coleridge, 486)

What a difference from the Lamouni hymn whose strong devotional feelings caused by the poet's gaze on the mountain were severely censured by Wordsworth as "strained and unnatural", which made Coleridge publish the whole poem as a specimen of the "Mock Sublime".

It is evident that the poets from the 17th century on up to Romanticism and the Victorian period, from Milton to Coleridge and Browning, oscillated in their readings of the Book of Nature between a position of faith and one of doubt. Hopkins, by contrast, never wavered although the late sonnets seem to show a poet full of uncertainty and indetermination, an attitude which opposes but does not affect nature's incar-

national beauty: "See banks and brakes / Now, leaved how thick! laced they are again / With fretty chervil, look, and fresh wind shakes / Them; birds build--but not I build ("Thou art indeed just", Poems, 107).

First of all Hopkins transcends earlier spiritual visions of nature in general and Romantic imagination in particular by his consistency, concreteness and substantiality. His sacramental vision asserts the transcendent moment as a direct, omnipresent, and given reality and intensely identifies the world with Christ; natural beauty perceived as a sign of divine beauty is not simply an abstract quality but the concrete beauty of Christ revealed in inanimate and animal nature: "And the azurous hung hills are his world-wielding shoulder / Majestic--as a stallion stalwart, very violet-sweet!" (Hurrahing in Harvest", Poems, 70).¹¹

¹¹ Hopkins' enthusiasm for truth, reality and concreteness in language and imagery--probably a carry-over of his more Ruskinian days--comes forth in his criticism, too. About the Wreck of the Deutschland he wrote to Bridges: "I may add for your greater interest and edification that what refers to myself in the poem is all strictly and literally true and did all occur; nothing is added for poetical padding" (Letters to Bridges, 47). No wonder that "the want of perfect form in the imagination" and exaggerated fancy, as Hopkins commented on Tennyson's Idylls, support falsehood and misrepresentation: "they are unreal in motive and incorrect, uncanonical so to say, in detail and keepings" (Correspondence with Dixon, 24).

A couple of years later he wrote: "the life must be conveyed into the work and be displayed there, not suggested as having been in the artist's mind: otherwise the product is one of those hen's-eggs that are good to eat and look just like live ones but never hatch" (Correspondence with Dixon, 133).

In the same year, in a letter to Coventry Patmore, he criticized Yeats's "Mosada" as "a strained and unworkable allegory about a young man and a sphinx on a rock in the sea" and discussed the poem's relation to concrete real-

Compared with such a rigorous and dogmatic view Wordsworth's and Coleridge's pantheistic theories of the mysterious and the sublime in nature appear markedly cautious. Hopkins admired Wordsworth for his "insight into nature" (Correspondence with Dixon, 55) and saw in him a follower of Plato.

What I suppose grows on people is that Wordsworth's particular grace, his charisma, as theologians say, has been granted in equal measure to so very few men since times was--to Plato and who else? I mean his spiritual insight into nature (Correspondence with Dixon, 141).¹²

According to Hopkins, Wordsworth nevertheless lacks complete perceptive richness when he metaphorically unites heaven and earth. The ethical aspect of his vision, what I called the meaning of "inscape", is not fully developed.

They [the Lake poets] were faithful but not rich observers of nature. Their keepings are their weak point, a sort of colourless classical keepings: when Wordsworth wants to describe a city or a cloud-scape which reminds him of a city it is some ordinary rhetorical stage-effect of domes, palaces, and temples (Correspondence with Dixon, 99).

ity: "how did they get there? what did they eat? and so on: people think such criticisms very prosaic; but commonsense is never out of place anywhere, neither on Parnassus nor Tabor nor on the Mount where our Lord preached" (Further Letters, 374).

12

It is interesting to see that Hopkins regards grace as the poet's capacity of vision; but grace is not only this apprehension of God or Christ under the appearance of the beautiful in nature but also "God's better beauty", as it is called in "To what serves Mortal Beauty" (Poems, 98). Grace is God's bestowal of the visionary faculty on man. Man touches nature through his sacramental vision in the same way as God touches man through His giving it to him, or, in other words, man's grace in perception and its expression in poetry answer God's grace. Vision, by being equated with grace, lifts man's consciousness up towards a first stage of fulfillment: faith.

Romantic vision, by shaping a world of its own, rather belongs with the otherworldliness of myth. It transforms the world into a higher entity which is artificial and unreal compared to Hopkins' concrete and objectified harmony. In spite of Hopkins' concept of "inscape" having a lot in common with myth, such as the explanation of the natural order, the cosmic forces, and the apprehension of nature as vehicle of belief, in short, the visualization of faith, myths, for Hopkins, preserve a hazy and inconceivable character which is only "believed in as history".¹³ But even as history, Hopkins claims, mythology is not true and therefore does not meet the requirements he set up for his kind of religious vision:

But mythology is something else besides fairytale: it is religion, the historical part of religion. [...] First it is as history untrue. What is untrue history? Nothing and worse than nothing. And that history religion? Still worse (Correspondence with Dixon, 146).

Since Hopkins always insists on the objectivity of his vision, the imaginary, unreal world of the Greek gods was nev-

¹³ Gerard Manley Hopkins, "The Connection of Mythology and Philosophy", unpubl. Oxford essay, quoted in James Finn Cotter, *op. cit.*, 308. Personification is another powerful mythical feature which occurs quite frequently in Hopkins' diaries between 1868 and 1873 and which foreshadows the identification of nature with Christ: "The mountain ranges, as any series or body of inanimate like things not often seen, have the air of persons and of interrupted activity" (Journals, 171). Anthropomorphic elements in nature such as "eyebrows" (Journals, 151, 179, 181, 184), "lips" (Journals, 152) or "tongues" (Journals, 209) among others represent the basis of a sacralizing vision. But they are eventually superseded in the St. Beuno poetry of 1877 by the definite and concrete immanence of Christ; myth becomes presence: "thrush / Through the echoing timber does rinse and wring / The ear, it strikes like lightnings to hear him sing" ("Spring", Poems, 67, emphasis mine).

er to appeal to him:

Believe me, the Greek gods are a totally unworkable material; the merest frigidity, which must chill and kill every living work of art they are brought into. Even if we put aside the hideous and, taken as they stand, unspeakable stories told of them, which stories nevertheless are as authentic as their names and personalities--both are equally imaginary (Letters to Bridges, 217).

Frigid, untrue and imaginary, these are the epithets with which Hopkins associated myth, and not with the intuitive knowledge of the unknowable.

Consequently, Hopkins' direct perceptual encounter with God also transcends Romantic imagination which attempts to understand the mystery of the other through a fusion of subject and object, of the self and the other. His imagination helps the Romantic poet to create the world according to his own ideas. This kind of visionary power affirms the absolute domination of a subjective consciousness which may far surpass in beauty the earth it inhabits. Thus the poet assumes the power of a priest; God recognized in every part of nature becomes indistinguishable from the poet-seer himself.¹⁴ Hopkins, by contrast, dedicates his powers utterly to reality which represents the only source of truth. There is a strong physical attraction between subject and object, though, "a stem of stress between us and things" (Journals, 127) in his vision: "what you look hard at seems to look

¹⁴ Although I think that Hopkins' poetry aspired to an imitation of Christ and thereby came very close to the Romantic idea that the creative act was responsible for no less than creating the self (in a kind of angelic condition), Hopkins never succumbed to the Romantic conceit of the deification of the self.

hard at you (Journals, 204). His catching of "inscapes" is nonetheless never the becoming one of seer and thing seen, in which all distinction would be lost. In Hopkins' cognitive vision subject and object always meet but never merge:

I kiss my hand
To the stars, lovely-asunder
Starlight, wafting him out of it; and
Glow, glory in thunder;
Kiss my hand to the dappled-with-damson west:
Since, tho' he is under the world's splendour and wonder,
His mystery must be instressed, stressed;
For I greet him the days I meet him, and bless when I understand.

The Wreck of the Deutschland (Poems, 53)

Nature remains an object, and primarily a concrete object of a single beholder's visual sense. If beauty were divorced from it, it would lose its sacramental character. For Hopkins, at this time, the unseen is the ultimately unknowable, "out of sight is out of mind" ("The Lantern out of Doors", Poems, 71), and what cannot be seen, cannot be believed in either. This attitude means that credence is possible through perception only; Hopkins' Weltanschauung (and his poetry) is wholly perceptive: sight, the evidence of things seen, becomes faith, the evidence of things not seen, and faith, in turn, turns to sight. Hopkins had now found in the form of his (God given) visionary insight into nature "that sense beyond", which he was longing for in his early poetry "To shew Thee that Thou art, and near" ("Nondum", Poems, 34).

The immediacy and palpability of Hopkins' simultaneous sensation and cognition by which Christ is made existentially present, is set forth in Hopkins' prose and poetry by means of a substantial union of heaven and earth whose archetypes are the Incarnation and Resurrection of Christ and man's

imitating attempts at salvation.¹⁵ When Hopkins describes the bluebells as "falls of sky-colour washing the brows and slacks of the ground with vein-blue" (Journals, 208-9), when "cobalt blue was poured on the hills" and "all the nearer valley was showered with tapered diamond flakes of fields" (Journals, 261), he not exclusively alludes to all the colored variety spread over the earth by God's act of creation. The movement in the vertical plane from heaven down to earth stands for the divine inspiration given to all things and beings in nature and obviously symbolizes the Incarnation, the meeting of mortality and immortality, Christ's descent from heaven to earth in all His splendor; thus natural beauty becomes transcendent:

I do not think I have ever seen anything more beautiful than the bluebell I have been looking at.
I know the beauty of our Lord by it (Journals, 199).¹⁶

¹⁵ One of Hopkins' very first nature descriptions is an interesting, anticipatory, case in point. "Till in the eastern seas there rise the lustrous (or splendid) sails of morn, the seas being the sky, not literal" (Journals, 17). Revealingly enough, the meeting of sky and earth, however, takes place in the distance.

¹⁶ Since, in Jungian psychology, the color blue also has alchemical value, the representation of the incarnation in Hopkins' nature imagery brings into play again the alchemist's endeavor to achieve the ultimate synthesis. It is very suggestive that Hopkins' sacramental vision accomplishes the long searched for transubstantiation, transforms mortal beauty into immortal beauty, lead into gold. Thus we are to understand the Golden Echo's answer to the Leaden Echo's despair also as a very physical process of transmutation (Poems, 91-3). "The Starlight Night" additionally shows that the alchemical coming together of heaven and earth also occurs at night and does not necessarily depend on direct sunlight: the gaze up to the stars turns down again and finds the celestial firelight "beamed" on the earth in the form of newly created gold, fire, and diamonds:

The oneness of the natural ("thrush's eggs") and the literally super-natural ("heaven"), set forth by the absence of the comparative particle, is felt to be the embodiment of ideal beauty: "Nothing is so beautiful as Spring--/ When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush, / Thrush's eggs look little low heavens" ("Spring", Poems, 67).

Through His Incarnation Christ brought personified love from the inaccessible spheres of the "above" down into the reach of mankind.¹⁷ This condescension which makes the invisible visible and the incomprehensible comprehensible fuses the most extreme contrasts possible: the human and the divine:¹⁸ for "Christ is in every sense God and in every sense man, and the interest is in the locked and inseparable combination, or rather it is in the person in whom the combination has its place" (Letters to Bridges, 188). Christ's taking on a human nature must have its impact by bringing out His nature, an event followed by the bliss of the onlooker's visionary meeting, as Hopkins writes in The Wreck of the Deutschland: "tho' he is under

Look at the stars! look, look up at the skies!
O look at all the fire-folk sitting in the air!
The bright boroughs, the circle-citadels there!
Down in dim woods the diamond delves! the elves'-eyes!
The grey lawns cold where gold, where quickgold lies!
Wind-beat whitebeam! airy abeles set on a flare!
(Poems, 66)

The constant rendering of heaven in earthly terms makes it hard to decide whether the poet is looking up to the sky or down to the earth; sacramental vision mingles both percepts and thereby envisages a kind of inter-world in mid-air.

¹⁷ Cf. chapter 3, p. 32

¹⁸ St. John of the Cross says in The Dark Night of the Soul that two contraries cannot coexist in one subject.

the world's splendour and wonder, / His mystery must be
instressed, stressed; / For I greet him the days I meet
him, and bless when I understand" (Poems, 53). Again, Hop-
kins could not have been more physical in picturing the
effect of Christ's coming into the natural world:

And azuring-over greybell makes
Wood banks and brakes wash wet like lakes.

"The May Magnificat" (Poems, 78)

Obviously Christ's Incarnation (the descent of the color
blue), is paralleled by a continual supply of water, the tra-
ditional image of divine grace coming from above, of which
Hopkins was despairing during the dark day of torment: "O
thou Lord of life, send my roots rain" ("Thou art indeed
just", Poems, 107). Nature, in its "graceful" workings dis-
closes God's grace behind it and releases man's appropriate
response: his life-long struggle to follow the movements
of all plants up to the blue sky, "old earth's groping to-
wards the steep / Heaven whom she child us by" ("Ash-boughs",
Poems, 185).¹⁹ Just as man, through faith and grace follows
Christ and tries to be lifted up to heaven, trees--an ever-
lasting fascination with Hopkins--grow up aided and support-
ed by what comes down from heaven to earth: light and water:

¹⁹ "Graceful" is a favorite of Hopkins' nature descriptions
since it pervades his journals from the beginning. One
can consider it an anticipation or even the very first
instance of the spiritual connotation of "inscape". The
semantic meaning "full of grace" lent itself very well
to a more profound interpretation, which is evident in
the following account from Holywell in 1874: "The strong
unfailing flow of the water and the chain of cures from
year to year all these centuries took hold of my mind
with wonder at the bounty of God in one of His saints,
the sensible thing so naturally and gracefully uttering
the spiritual reason of its being" (Journals, 261).
See next chapters for a final analysis of Hopkins' con-
cept of grace.

The glassy peartree leaves and blooms, they brush
The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush
With richness;

"Spring" (Poems, 67)

Another way to lay before our eyes the close relation of heaven and earth is the occasional glimpse. Hopkins likes facing the sunlight and observing the sky, preferably through the branches and leaves of trees, whereas forced looking down is a punishment he inflicted on himself several times: "But a penance which I was doing from Jan. 25 to July 25 prevented my seeing much that half-year" (Journals, 190). The upward perspective allows the observer to realize the kaleidoscopic effect of light on plants. Heavenly light, its radiance, reflection, and refraction gives resplendent clarity to all objects: the fusion of heaven and earth turns things into the alchemist's gold and makes vision possible:

Looking at the elms from underneath you saw every
wave in every twig (become by this the wire-like
stem to a finger of snow) and to the hangers and
flying sprays it restored, to the eye, the inscapes
they had lost. They were beautifully brought out
against the sky, which was on one side dead blue,
on the other washed with gold (Journals, 196).

The upward gaze unmistakably enhances the truth and beauty of observation: "Putting my hand up against the sky whilst we lay on the grass I saw more richness and beauty in the blue than I had known of before" (Journals, 154). The view from below towards the sun of God, "the true eye and ace of the whole" (Journals, 196), brings out even the distances and is eventually transformed into the "inscape" of heaven's inspiration which affects and touches nature with sacramental brightness; the objects of perception become Christian

by means of their luminous quality:

The heights by Snowdown were hidden by the clouds but not from distance or dimness. The nearer hills, the other side of the valley, shewed a hard and beautifully detached and glimmering brim against the light, which was lifting there. All the length of the valley the skyline of hills was flowingly written all along upon the sky. A blue bloom, a sort of meal, seemed to have spread upon the distant south, enclosed by a basin of hills. Looking all round but most in looking far up the valley I felt an instress and charm of Wales (Journals, 258).

Looking towards the sun, then, means looking towards the son and again following the upward movement of all 'inanimate' nature: "Earth, sweet Earth, sweet landscape, with leaves throng / And louched low grass, heaven that dost appeal / To" ("Ribblesdale", Poems, 90). Thus it comes into bright focus that Hopkins saw in trees the perfect "inscapes" of what man could do to realize his self-being in order to turn Christ's love into his own. Man's aspiration to heaven following God's inspiration manifests itself from the beginning of his existence in Paradise by his innocent look towards the skies:

As new wak't from soundest sleep
Soft on the flow'ry herb I found me laid
In Balmy Sweat, which with his Beams the Sun
Soon dri'd, and on the reeking moisture fed.
Straight toward Heav'n my wond'ring Eyes I turn'd
And gaz'd awhile the ample Sky, till rais'd
By quick instinctive motion up I sprung,
As thitherward endeavouring, and upright
Stood on my feet;

Paradise Lost VIII/253-61 (Milton, 224)

Evidently, the Incarnation of Christ was the greatest incident in man's history by which "the trivialness of life is, and personally to each one, ought to be seen to be, done away" (Further Letters, 19). This event is still effective and per-

ceptible if "you refresh the mind from time to time" in order to "remember or believe how deep the inscape in things is" (Journals, 205). Memory, therefore, makes one apprehend God in the here-and-now by means of a vitally creative act of perception--not imagination.

On the contemplating Persons, Words and Actions--
These three points belong to the three powers, memory, understanding and will. Memory is the name for that faculty which towards present things is Simple Apprehension and, ... towards things future or things unknown or imaginary is Imagination. When continued or kept on the strain the act of this faculty is attention, advertence, heed, the being ware, and its habit, knowledge, the being aware. Towards God it gives rise to reverence, it is the sense of the presence of God (Sermons, 174).

Memory leads the observer's thoughts back to "that cheer and charm of earth's past prime" ("The Sea and the Skylark", Poems, 68), to the "strain of the earth's sweet being in the beginning / In Eden garden" ("Spring", Poems, 67). This ideal and paradisial . state of happiness and bliss is then transposed into timelessnesspresence; Christ's dwelling among us in human time changes into the Word made flesh in aeonian time (cf. Sermons, 197). Past becomes present and finally eternity: " ... the spring in place [Holywell] leading back the thoughts by its spring in time to its spring in eternity" (Journals, 261). The wistful glare into the distance of a time to be in Hopkins' early poetry has been superseded by the St. Beuno poetry's look back which actualizes the past into the concrete form of a fixed and permanent type within the time being.²⁰ Nowhere is this immanence of the divine

²⁰ In Hopkins' St. Beuno poetry there is a slight additional change from the perspective of its imagery:

in nature, this steady uttering "His presence is a reality" (Sermons, 194) felt more strongly than in the significance ascribed to Corpus Christi.

Corpus Xti differs from all other feasts in this that its reason and occasion is present. [...] But Corpus Christi is the feast of the Real Presence; Therefore it is the most purely joyous of solemnities. Naturally the Blessed Sacrament is carried in procession at it, as you saw. But the procession has more meaning and mystery than this: it represents the process of the Incarnation and the world's redemption (Letters to Bridges, 149).

The apprehension and affirmation of the essence of things in an 'eternal moment' which is independent from our ideas of the course of time recalls the literature of the sublime, including the emphasis on terror and dread, "a certain awe

Whereas "For a Picture of St Dorothea" bears witness to a dramatic metamorphosis of the quince into the moon and the larkspurs into the Milky Way, the poetry written in Wales uses a different approach: "Moonrise" presents the moon as "the fringe of a fingernail held to a candle, / Or paring of paradisaical fruit" (Poems, 19-20, 176). The earlier, unresolved poetry renders earth in heavenly terms and thus removes the imminent union into the distant spheres. Poems such as "The Starlight Night", "Pied Beauty", or "Hurrahing in Harvest", by contrast, celebrate heaven in earthly phrases; the union is palpable. The verse written during the last stage of Hopkins' poetic activities, such as the fragment "Epithalamion", still shows nature's sacramental character: the vertical movement is unmistakable. The direction from earth to heaven, however, betrays a desire that points again into the distance.

Rafts and rafts of flake leaves light, dealt so,
painted on the air,
Hang as still as hawk or hawkmoth, as the stars or as
the angels there

(Poems, 198)

Furthermore, most of the St. Beuno poetry (with the exception of "The Windhover") distinguishes itself by an extensive use of verbs in the present tense, which underscores the fact of actual revelation.

and instress" (Journals, 249).

This busy working of nature wholly independent of the earth and seeming to go on in a strain of time not reckoned by our reckoning of days and years but simpler and as if correcting the preoccupation of the world by being preoccupied with and appealing to and dated to the day of judgement was like a new witness to God and filled me with delightful fear (Journals, 200).

Hopkins' most suggestive because most physical images of the union of contrasts, however, are the electric discharge and the 'magic' touch, which recalls the medieval figure of the alchemist on the one hand and the 19th century world of scientific experiments of all kinds on the other.

All things therefore are charged with love, are charged with God and if we know how to touch them give off sparks and take fire, yield drops and flow, ring and tell of him (Sermons, 195).

The cosmos radiates Christ everywhere if only there is a beholder to witness it. This ecstasy of vision creates love, an "instress" in the heart, which carries the observer straight towards the "love above", the heaven of Christ Who becomes the poet's "spouse" ("The Starlight Night", Poems, 67):

And the azurous hung hills are his world-wielding shoulder
Majestic--as a stallion stalwart, very-violet-sweet!--
These things, these things were here and but the beholder
Wanting; which two when they once meet,
The heart rears wings bold and bolder
And hurls for him, O half hurls earth for him off under his feet.

"Hurrahing in Harvest" (Poems, 70)

The visionary encounter with Christ is even more real and sincere if it takes on the closeness of touch.²¹ Seeing or

²¹ Cf. Hopkins' gamut of the senses in a reversed situation,

touching nature reveals the essential truth behind objects and make them literally accessible to the observer in their crowning beauty: "I had the bud of a purple flagflower in water and happening to touch it it broke open" (Journals, 200). As the introductory quotation of this paragraph gives to understand, the cognitive insight into or the 'touch' of nature is related to figures of fire, light and energy. "The world is charged with the grandeur of God" exclaimed Hopkins in "God's Grandeur", one of his most enthusiastic sonnets, and continues that "it will flame out, like shining from shook foil; / It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil / Crushed" (Poems, 66). It seems that faith does not come up without a chemical or al-chemical transformation caused by the contact of actual understanding.²² For this reason, electric fire not only stands for the destructive process of material Heraclitean change (cf. "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire") but was primarily taken up and emphasized as the sign and attribute of God which provokes a spiritual change in the view of things.²³

though: "Sight does not shock like hearing, sounds cannot so disgust as smell, smell is not so bitter as proper bitterness which is in taste; [...] And still bitterness of taste is not so cruel as the pain that can be touched and felt. Seeing is believing but touch is the truth, the saying goes" (Sermons, 243).

²² The relation of physical contact and electricity is an everyday experience which always fascinated Hopkins: "In taking off my jersey of knitted wool in the dark with an accidental stroke of my finger down the stuff I drew a flash of electric light" (Journals, 196).

²³ The flash of lightning "uttered by a tongue of brightness" (Journals, 212) had consistently been very important in the

By assimilating the phenomenon of electric fire as the effect of the dynamic mutual attraction of opposite elements into his sacramental vision of things, Hopkins succeeds in harmonizing his scientific inclinations with his religious convictions.²⁴ The union of plus and minus or of heaven and earth is both physical and spiritual, alchemical and sacred. Moreover, the discharge of energy and fire discloses their sources as active centres that exist to fulfill their own distinctive natures:

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;
As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's
Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;
Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
Selves--goes itself; myself it speaks and spells,
Crying What I do is me: for that I came.

(Poems, 90)

Consequently, the union of contrasts is an utterance, let

theophanies in Scripture: "The voice of the Lord makes flames of fire burst forth" (Psalm 29, 7), or "There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in the flame of a burning bush" (Exodus, 3, 2).

²⁴ Schelling's philosophy of nature is similarly based on polarity: dynamic processes are put and kept in operation by the repulsion of corresponding elements and the attraction of opposite elements. Hegel's dialectic, then, goes beyond his predecessor's view in so far as the 'synthesis' dissolves the conflict between thesis and antithesis in the triple sense of the German verb 'aufheben': abolish, preserve, and raise. Hopkins' sacramental vision is an equivalent union of contrasts: heaven and earth are brought together without becoming fully identical; there is no fusion of subject and object, only a maximal reduction of opposition. At the same time the observer experiences the ecstasy of vision, viz. faith and "elevating" grace, "which lifts the receiver from one cleave of being to another and to a vital act in Christ" (Sermons, 158).

alone an exclamation of self, of "the dearest freshness deep down things" of nature that is never spent ("God's Grandeur", Poems, 66). The final synthesis corresponds to the speech of every object in nature; their voices "ring", "tell", and "find tongue", in short, they develop linguistic competence: selving is speaking. Thus the union of contrasts by means of a sacramental vision accomplishes a communication between heaven and earth, and additionally between man and God through lyrical acceptance:

Over again I feel thy finger and find thee.
[...]

I kiss my hand
To the stars, lovely-asunder
Starlight, wafting him out of it; and
Glow, glory in thunder;
Kiss my hand to the dappled-with-damson west:

The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanzas 1, 5,
(Poems, 51, 53)

This poetic realization of the great synthesis accounts for the gradual disappearance of the term "inscape" from Hopkins' writings after 1875. The explicit use of the expression "inscape" in his journals is superseded by appropriate, equally explicit images of union, identity and understanding when he resumed poetry in 1877. Apparently Hopkins' view of the late 1870s holds that only poetic creation possesses the capacity to express the "instress" of the "shock" as it was experienced by the tall nun in the Deutschland:

Ah! there was a heart right!
There was single eye!
Read the unshapeable shock night
And knew the who and the why;
Wording it how but by him that present and past,
Heaven and earth are word of, worded by?--
The Simon Peter of a soul! to the blast
Tarpeian-fast, but a blown beacon of light.

The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanza 29, (Poems,

The nun's experience of this shock and its expression by the poet, "Word, that heard and kept thee and uttered thee outright" (The Wreck of the Deutschland, Poems, 61) signify nothing but the possession of the vision which fuses the secular CREATED world and the sacred CREATING world.

There have been in all history a few, a very few men, whom common repute, even where it did not trust them, has treated as having had something happen to them that does not happen to other men, as having seen something, whatever that really was. Plato is the most famous of these. Or to put it as it seems to me I must somewhere have written to you or to somebody, human nature in these men saw something, got a shock; wavers in opinion, looking back, whether there was anything in it or no; but is in a tremble ever since (Correspondence with Dixon, 147-8).²⁵

Only through poetry Hopkins is able to depict a responsive universe in which Christ operates the likeness of himself in things by the communication of His power. Thus no question remains unanswered. Hopkins' poems of the great synthesis manifest an enduring principle of definite answers, which resolve the Oxford poetry's permanent quest for solutions in the distance. The immediate reply that does not leave a

- 25 "The Starlight Night" beautifully plays on the double sense of the word "shock":

Look! March-bloom, like on mealed-with-yellow fallows!
These are indeed the barn; withindoors house
The shocks. This piece-bright paling shuts the spouse
Christ home, Christ and his mother and all his hallows.

To begin with, "shock" stands for the harvested corn: "A steep sloping field in which the sheaves were scattered and left in the rain, not made into stooks (which by the by the Devonshire people call shocks)" (Journals, 251). Beside the radiating yellow color "shock" also means the reverberating encounter of contrasts in vision. To have the sight is to be shocked and to bring in the harvest, to be touched and to succeed. Activity and passivity are in delightful harmony.

trace of mystery is a recurrent and most obvious trope of union: "What is all this juice and all this joy? / A strain of the earth's sweet being in the beginning / In Eden garden" ("Spring", Poems, 67). "Hurrahing in Harvest" openly actualizes the mutual responsiveness of man and cosmos:

I walk, I lift up, I lift up heart, eyes,
Down all that glory in the heavens to glean our Saviour;
And, eyes, heart, what looks, what lips yet gave you a
Rapturous love's greeting of realer, of rounder replies?

(Poems, 70)

Hopkins' predilection for the sonnet form with which he started to work in this period is therefore not surprising. The structure of the sonnet with its two unequal parts reflects the oneness-in-duality, the union of contrasts, by setting forth the two-part proportion of question and answer. Thus, very often, a given theme in the sonnets' octet is ordered by an omnipresent interpretative impulse for harmony in the sestet.²⁶

So far we have seen that the conjunctive imagery which displays the fusion of contrasts is manifold. We have additionally noticed that the meeting area of extremes where oppositions struggle with each other and where they are ostentatiously disclosed and eventually brought together, is the space between the sky and the earth, the physical air which becomes a metaphysical interworld of mutual attraction and repulsion, of aspiration and falling. Plants, rain, light, etc. are most effective examples of appropriate images. Especially the rainbow, the compound of rain and light, is a palpable link bet-

²⁶ Hopkins himself described the sonnet as having a "strong unity" (Correspondence with Dixon, 137).

ween heaven and earth:

When the rainbow arching high
Looks from the zenith round the sky,
Lit with exquisite tints seven
Caught from angels' wings in heaven
[...]
Then while the rain-born arc glows higher
Westward on his sinking sire;
While the upgazing country seems
Touch'd from heaven in sweet dreams;

"Il Mystico" 107-10/123-6 (Poems, 114)²⁷

Hopkins' dearest symbol of union, at all events, is the bird. It covers the space between the here-below and the there-above and thus makes disappear the vertical, physical distance between the poles of transitoriness and transcendence.

Hopkins differs from the Romantic poets in the exploitation of the bird image. To poets like Keats or Shelley the bird is a symbol of spiritual life, of a hopefully never-ending escape from earth's mortal pull into sweet oblivion or an airy void outside human limitation. Hopkins' birds, by contrast, never 'forget' their biological linkage to their transitory origin even in their wildest flight. The skylark is an interesting case in point. The flight of Shelley's bird is beautifully described by William Empson:

It [the skylark] rises higher and higher, straight upwards, alone, always singing, always in effort, till becoming exhausted somewhere out of sight of the normal world it tumbles back in silence and resumes a humble, isolated and invisible existence somewhere in the middle of a field.²⁸

²⁷ Of course the poem in question was written at the beginning of Hopkins' career. Expressions like "seems" and "dreams" are the telltale indications of a still hypothetical and distant union. The issue of the image however remains the same.

²⁸ William Empson, Seven Types of Ambiguity, London, 1956, 158

Hopkins was equally enraptured by the skylark's flight and song and equally put it, along with the sea's noise and motion, into deliberate contrast to the actual world's "ringing out":

"The Sea and the Skylark"

On ear and ear two noises too old to end
Trench--right, the tide that ramps against the shore;
With a flood or a fall, low lull-off or all roar,
Frequenting there while moon shall wear and wend.
Left hand, off land, I hear the lark ascend,
His rash-fresh re-winded new-skeined score
In crisps of curl off wild winch whirl, and pour
And pelt music, till none's to spill nor spend.
How these two shame this shallow and frail town!
How ring right out our sordid turbid time,
Being pure! We, life's pride and cared-for crown,
Have lost that cheer and charm of earth's past prime:
Our make and making break, are breaking, down
To man's last dust, drain fast towards man's first slime.

(Poems, 68)

The skylark stands for earth's purity and innocence before the fall. It embodies the ideal state of union and harmony that is to be transposed into the present time by the poet's sacramental vision. Yet Hopkins never indulges in hopeless nostalgia for "earth's past prime". He is aware of the fact that the sea as well as the skylark are parts of nature which have also become transitory with the fall of mankind. It is the observer's spiritual insight, his "inscaping", which makes him see nature differently. This insight transforms the evanescent and the mortal--while still including it--into a higher reality.²⁹

²⁹ It is Christ's dwelling on earth which, by analogy, strikes our hearts with the shock of understanding and overwhelms our souls as the liquid of a sloe flushes our mouth. It is Christ's relation to the mortal world that makes men follow Him and attempt to live up to an imitation of Him:

"The Caged Skylark" sets forth a comparison of man and bird in their relation to transient nature.

"The Caged Skylark"

As a dare-gale skylark scanted in a dull cage

Man's mounting spirit in his bone-house, mean house, dwells--
That bird beyond the remembering his free fells,
This in drudgery, day-labouring-out life's age.

Though aloft on turf or perch or poor low stage,
Both sing sometimes the sweetest, sweetest spells,
Yet both droop deadly sometimes in their cells
Or wring their barriers in bursts of fear or rage.

Not that the sweet-fowl, song-fowl, needs no rest--
Why, hear him, hear him babble and drop down to his nest,
But his own nest, wild nest, no prison.

Man's spirit will be flesh-bound when found at best,
But uncumbered: meadow-down is not distressed
For a rainbow footing it nor he for his bones risen.

(Poems, 70-1)

This poem is not easy to explain because the situation of the bird in its cage and of the soul confined in the body are first described as identical. But then differences in this seeming likeness emerge: the linkage of the bird to na-

It dates from day
Of his going in Galilee;
Warm-laid grave of a womb-life grey;
Manger, maiden's knee;
The dense and the driven Passion, and frightful sweat:
Thence the discharge of it, there its swelling to be,
Though felt before, though in high flood yet--
What none would have known of it, only the heart, being hard at bay,

Is out with it! Oh,
We lash with the best or worst
Word last! How a lush-kept plush-capped sloe
Will, mouthed to flesh-burst,
Gush!-- flush the man, the being with it, sour or sweet,
Brim, in a flash, full!-- Hither then, last or first,
To hero of Calvary, Christ,'s feet--
Never ask if meaning it, wanting it, warned of it--men go.

The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanzas 7-8 (Poems, 53-4)

It is Christ's sharing His divine being with men that pushes men, while remaining themselves, to become Christ in a true and literal sense.

ture ought to be constituted by "his own nest, wild nest, no prison", whereas "Man's spirit will be flesh-bound when found at best", that is to say, man is not man without the body; he is not to try, in exaggerated spirituality, to throw off the body. Consequently, both man and bird likewise comprehend their mortal component. The soul needs the body so that man is moulded to completion, and the bird could not stand for the perfect state of being if it flew only through the heavenly spheres and did not rest on the ground in its nest: the orientation towards earth is an integral part of the bird's composition.³⁰ But a cage is liable to prevent the bird from flying at all and is therefore much more cumbersome and restrictive than the body. This latter is not a prison which only hampers the soul; it is the physical starting point, let alone stairway, for the soul's rising to heaven like a rainbow "footing" a meadow.

What it comes all down to is that Hopkins' birds, preferably caught in their flight, but never cut loose from earth, stand for an ideal combination of the natural and the supernatural. Thus they become like Christ Who was both divine and human, a substantial union of body relating them to earth, and

³⁰ In Scripture and literature the spirit of God is often presented as brooding over the world:

Oh morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs--
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

"God's Grandeur" (Poems, 66)

Thou from the first
Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread
Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast Abyss
And mad'st it pregnant

Paradise Lost I/19-22, (Milton, 47)

of the soul tying them to heaven. Hopkins' dedication for "The Windhover" which is generally said to be his masterpiece and which the poet himself considered his best poem, underscores the bird's affinity with Christ:

"The Windhover"

To Christ our Lord

I caught this morning morning's minion, king-
dom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding
Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding
High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing
In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,
As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and gliding
Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding
Stirred for a bird--the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!
Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here
Buckle! AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion
Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!
No wonder of it: sheer plod makes plough down sillion
Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,
Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion.

(Poems, 69)

The octet of the sonnet is devoted to the description of a falcon. The bright sunlight of the morning makes possible detailed and perfect perception in which the "inscaped" bird shows itself in all its beauty of motion and splendor of color. Thus the kestrel reveals God's glory and the concrete beauty of Christ behind every created being, which again produces a strong "instress" within the observer's loving heart. The sight of the falcon provokes the ecstasy of vision and lifts him up to the same spheres: "The heart rears wings bold and bolder / And hurls for him, O half hurls earth for him off under his feet" ("Hurrahing in Harvest", Poems, 70). These soaring thoughts of the onlooker's cognitive understanding imitate the ecstasy of the bird's motion in the air and eventually give rise to the creation of the poem. This moment of simultaneous cognition and creation is revealingly pic-

tured in the third stanza of the Deutschland: "I whirled out wings that spell / And fled with a fling of the heart to the heart of the Host. / My heart, but you were dovewinged, I can tell" (Poems, 52). It is the poet's privilege to "tell" of his visionary insight that raises him "spell"-bound into the air as the witness of revealed truth and that is bound to captivate a potential reader, too: in his joy the poet meets with Christ and exultingly "spells" His name (the wings take on the form of a cross). At the same time, he "spells" (enchants) the reader of the poem. Thus the literary creation mediates between personal experience and active persuasion.³¹ The sestet describes the falcon as it gradually rises from down-to-earth animal beauty up to the air into the state of a plumed, angel-like being. Thus the kestrel lives through all stages that make up its essential features. This rise, paralleled by an increase of tension ends up in the climax-catharsis of the real Incarnation, the culmination of creation: the famous exclamation "Buckle!" specifically defines the moment when the "inscape" of the beautiful bird becomes Christ Himself in blood and flesh coming down to earth to redeem mankind. It is the stroke of time when the worlds of heaven and earth, of the divine and the human, of permanence

31 George Herbert's "Easter Wings" not only conjures up the image of the wings in the emblematic form of the poem but also presents the bird's flight and song (here it is the lark again) as the desired symbol of redeeming Christ, the ideal inspiration to be observed by man's (and the poet's) aspiration:

With thee
O let me rise
As larks, harmoniously,
And sing this day thy victories:

(George Herbert, The Works, Oxford, 1941, (hereafter cited as Herbert), 43).

and transitoriness are literally and physically united, fastened, just buckled by Christ.³²

When this great synthesis is achieved, beauty and glory can discharge themselves much more strongly upon a potential observer than could be the case with a mere and simple observation (note the annunciatory power of "AND"): "Buckle! AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion / Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!" But the pattern of fire as symbol of the utterance and expression of self

³² "Buckle!" has given rise to numerous and often rather obscure interpretations. It should be generally borne in mind that its basic semantic content is one of union, of coming together. In Scottish or North of England dialect, (and we know that Hopkins was very much interested in all kinds of dialects), it also means "marry". The English language allows of a usage of "buckle" either in an intransitive or transitive way. Reading it first of all as a transitive verb ("fasten") the objects of which are heaven and earth--although not explicitly in the poem--it means the moment of the Incarnation of Christ characteristically represented as the connexion of two opposites. A buckle is a fastening for two loose ends that is attached to one and holds the other by a catch. Christ Incarnate performs the same activity: He is attached to heaven and connects the earth with it or, in other words, He holds the earth by a catch. Thus He creates an interworld of union.

James Milroy corroborates my theory by pointing at the poet's general tendency to blend transitive and intransitive values: "Hopkins often omits the object of a transitive verb or, conversely, manages to suggest that an intransitive verb has a concealed object of some kind. The effect is really to override the distinction between the actor and the thing affected" (James Milroy, The Language of Gerard Manley Hopkins, London, 1977, 226). From this statement there follows an imminent problem and a telling ambiguity: who is the agent of the "buckling" and who or what is affected by it? I venture to say that the windhover/Christ is the creator of the union as well as the latter's own product. In the same way, the poem is induced by Christ's uniting power, just as the same poem creates the union itself by means of its imitation of Christ. "Buckle!" thus refers to Christ and poem. Both are cause and effect of the synthesis. (See also next chapter for a close analysis of the relation between text and imitation.)

is also "dangerous" because the Incarnation, as a consequence of the Fall, embraces the terror of the Passion too. In other words, the real, essential self can be revealed only by labor, pain, and possibly death. This idea holds true for Christ and, "no wonder of it", also for mankind: hard work is indispensable to show forth a flame down in the furrow which prepares for the seed, for the growth of a fulfilled life; and before blue-bleak embers can "gash gold-vermilion" (note the gold again!) they have to fall and to "gall themselves". I think that the final images of "The Windhover" do not allude to the Resurrection as has often been maintained. They might marginally foreshadow the eternal bliss that accompanies the final redemption, but it cannot be too strongly emphasized that Hopkins, at this stage of his literary activity, never explicitly mentions the Resurrection in his poems. Light and fire are tropes of union that bear upon the Incarnation and, on the level of humble man, upon the realization of intrinsic, fundamental, and holy self.

In the course of this and the previous two chapters the status of "inscape" has been thoroughly explored. It has become clear that "inscape" and "instress" were not fixed ideas from the beginning but developed in Hopkins' mind over the years to their full significance in the St. Beuno poetry. A lot has been written about the influence that had been exerted by the medieval English philosopher Duns Scotus on the genesis of Hopkins' concept. It is certainly indisputable that Scotus' thoughts had a continuous bearing on Hopkins from the moment the latter came across the 'subtle doctor's' works:

At this time Aug 3, 1872 I had first begun to get hold of the copy of Scotus on the Sentences

in the Baddely library and was flush with a new stroke of enthusiasm. It may come to nothing or it may be a mercy from God. But just then when I took in any inscape of the sky or sea I thought of Scotus (Journals, 221).

But both aesthetic and ethical "inscape" are solidly based on Hopkins' undergraduate essays and other manuscripts written before 1872. The concept of "inscape" might not have been fully worked out when Hopkins started to read and love Scotus, but in my view the Scholastic philosopher only served to add the final stroke of confirmation and justification to the almost finished picture of Hopkins' thoughts. Scotus was above all a positive sanction of Hopkins' love of natural "inscapes" and their relation to the grandeur of God: "a not / Rivalled insight" ("Duns Scotus's Oxford", Poems, 79). Christopher Devlin's catalogue of what Hopkins and Scotus had in common is still the best treatise on the subject: Scotus encouraged Hopkins in the attitudes that spiritual reality can be imbibed directly through the senses, that we can have insight into what is going on behind the outworks of secondary images and ideas, that what is going on here and now is the act of creation, and that the reason for creation is the humanity of Christ.³³

The Scotist doctrine conceives of the so-called 'first act' of knowledge as a confused intuition in which a union of sense and intellect provokes the consciousness of the object as a concrete, living thing. Only when this direct knowledge of the particular sense-object has been gained can the Scotist

³³ Christopher Devlin, "The Image and the Word", Month, 1950, 191, 202

proceed to the characteristic medieval concern: the universal and abstract aspects of things, the totality of being which is closely identified with God. This attitude which is analogous to Hopkins' structure of being³⁴ contradicts the position of St. Thomas Aquinas in which the Jesuits were especially trained. Scotus' and Hopkins' natural order is existentially oriented towards Christ, beginning from the lower creatures and gradually ascending and advancing to the culminating knowledge of the Savior. Both aspects of an individual thing, its generic form (called by Scotus its quiditas or 'whatness') and its distinctive form (called haecceitas or 'thisness') represent components of an individuating principle of which the latter is the ultima realitas entis, the last formal determination which completes form and matter to an essential individuality. Since an object's quiditas, or form within, is derived from the haecceitas, or outward sensible manifestation, the idea of the divine roots deeply in this final definition of the individual: haecceitas is Scotus' bridge between the finite and the infinite, his relation between the creature and God. The medieval philosopher's intellectual and sensitive grasp of the immediate reality of the concrete, singular object comes close to Hopkins' sacramental vision because it also emphasizes the idea of presence and actuality and favors intuitive, immediate, visionary sensation over abstract imagination. No wonder Hopkins called Scotus "who of all men most sways my spirits to peace; / Of realty the rarest-veined unraveller" ("Duns Scotus's Oxford", Poems, 79). But considerable differences between the two conceptions must be accentuated, too: Hopkins' integrity between nature imagery and

³⁴ Cf. chapter 2, p. 19

religious vision cannot be adequately provided by Duns Scotus' theories. Haecceitas, the distinctive individuality of an object, does not hold such an eminent place in Hopkins' "inscape" as in Scotus' apprehension of nature. There is no doubt that the aesthetic aspect of "inscape" and above all the truth of perception hinges on its distinctiveness; but "inscape", by being equivalent to the process of selving, also emphasizes the quidditas of a thing, its formation into a definite type.³⁵ Scotus, by contrast, almost destroys the unity of the species in order to safeguard the particularity of the individual which he considered the goal to be reached by perfect nature. Furthermore Hopkins' concept of "inscape" makes much more of the link to God than the Scotist philosophy. that is to say, in contrast to Scotus, Hopkins had shifted his emphasis from the outer form (distinctiveness) to the inner form (universality) which he does not conceive any more as actual form but as meaning: the ethical aspect of "inscape" becomes central and essential to his Weltanschauung. Thus haecceitas is certainly a corroboration of Hopkins' original idea of "inscape" that flowed into his later theory, such as in the following statement dating from 1879: "Now it is the virtue of design, pattern, or inscape to be distinctive" (Letters to Bridges, 66). Yet as soon as Hopkins opens his horizon to sacramental vision, he breaks away from the narrow field of outer form. Duns Scotus is at variance with this attitude because his bridge to God is placed within outer form which thereby becomes an end in itself. For Hopkins, by contrast, outer form is a means to the end of the apprehen-

³⁵ Cf. chapter 2, pp. 20-1 on the definition of "inscape"

sion of inner form or meaning. Consequently, Hopkins' conception of selving as pointed out earlier in this chapter transcends and even overcomes Scotus' notion of the individual in order to align it with his entirely new intuitive insight into the essence of being. On the whole it can be said that this treatment of Duns Scotus' thoughts, whether partly taken over or not by Hopkins, reflects the poet's typical method of carefully studying the other and creating something new and original out of it.

5 . H O P K I N S A N D I M I T A T I O :

I m i t a t i o n a n d t h e P o e t

In addition to Duns Scotus' ideas Hopkins found another philosophical touchstone with which he could align his own theories. The Spiritual Exercises of the founder of the Society of Jesus, Ignatius of Loyola, were to evoke an instant response in Hopkins. As with Scotus I would specifically argue that Ignatian spirituality did not engender absolutely new feelings; it rather fell on the very fecund ground of Hopkins' concept of "inscape" which it helped to lead into a definite direction. Thus it is very difficult to say if Ignatius' writings triggered Hopkins' going over to the Jesuits or if his new religious vocation made him build the Spiritual Exercises into his view of things. One way or another, Ignatius and Hopkins not only share the long and loving look at the sky and stars but also the sacramental vision or felt awareness of God in nature: in the "Contemplation for Obtaining Love" Hopkins ruminates over Ignatius' given consideration:

The second point is to consider how God dwells in creatures: in the elements giving them being; in the plants giving them growth; in the animals giving them sensation; in men giving them understanding; and so in me giving me being, life, sensation, and causing me to understand (Sermons, 193).¹

¹ The corresponding paragraph is to be found in: Ignacio de Loyola, The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius, transl. by Louis J. Puhl, Westminster, 1951, 235

What Hopkins certainly learnt from Ignatius was how and what man on his part "ought to offer and give to his divine Majesty, that is to say, all things that are mine and myself with them," in recompense for God's gifts (Sermons, 193). This offering stands for the individual's active attempt to reach the state of highest perfection and truest selving as Hopkins expresses it in the sestet of the kingfisher sonnet:

I say more: the just man justices;
Keeps grace: that keeps all his goings graces;
Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is--
Christ. For Christ plays in ten thousand places,
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his
To the Father through the features of men's faces.
(Poems, 90)

This poem, written just after the so-called 'Tertianship' or 'Third Year of Probation',² when Hopkins' thoughts must have been circling very much around the ontological significance of natural activity, shows very well that man's way to God consists of his and natural objects' bringing forth their true self.

The previous chapter has exposed in detail that this selving process in nature bears witness to Christ's permanent incarnation harmonizing the poles of natural and divine. To bring forth one's true self therefore means for all individuals to take an interest in Christ and to aim to be like Him because He was first like us and He first took an interest in us. Thereby man, in cooperation with grace, becomes an alter

² The Tertianship is the period during which a Jesuit turns away from his duties as a parish priest or teacher and, for one year, examines his own inner life in order to come to grips with the tenets of perfection laid down in the Spiritual Exercises.

Christus, or "an AfterChrist" (Sermons, 100).

The life of Jesus is most perfectly followed by those who take the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.³ In fact, the Spiritual Exercises on which the life and activity of the Society are entirely based, were designed to use the human faculties in order to realize Jesus through faith within the very being of the believer. According to this old Christian doctrine man would thus steadily ascend within the structure of being towards Him Who is in everybody and everything. In a letter to Bridges Hopkins lays open these ideal qualities in Christ to which he had turned his mind and which made an imitation desirable:

...., he emptied or exhausted himself so far as that was possible, of godhead and behaved only as God's slave, as his creature, as man, which also he was, and then being in the guise of man humbled himself to death, the death of the cross. It is this holding of himself back, and not snatching at the truest and highest good, the good that was his right, nay his possession from a past eternity in his other nature, his own being and self, which seems to me the root of all his holiness and the imitation of this the root of all moral good in other men (Letters to Bridges, 175).

Evidently the yearning for positive identification with Christ, the "Christ being me and me being Christ" (Sermons, 154) is of paramount importance in the life of a member of the Society; the device of imitation represents the permanent impulse of a Jesuit's spiritual ambition just as the wind drives on a ship when it fills its sail:

Christ [is] as a solid in his member as a hollow or shell, both things being the image of God; which

³ "I can speak more freely now because I have bound myself to our Lord for ever to be poor, chaste, and obedient like Him and it delights me to think of it" (Further Letters, 113).

can only be perfectly when the member is in all things conformed to Christ. This too best brings out the nature of the man himself, as the lettering on a sail or device upon a flag are best seen when it fills (Sermons, 195).

St. Ignatius taught Hopkins to make the imitation of Christ the one and only goal of his life. As a matter of fact, the powerful meditational technique of Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises adapts the mimetic principle to the life of Christ. It is not at all arbitrary speculation but turns out to be analogous to Hopkins' sacramental vision because it is an effort of the imagination that tries to penetrate to the essential being of Christ and carefully reconstructs persons and settings

⁴ Since Thomas à Kempis' spiritual classic Of the Imitation of Christ was read every day in the refectory the novices were familiar with the idea of imitation from the beginning. We should recall, however, that this device was a fixed idea of Hopkins that had struck him before he made it his motive in the Society of Jesus. In the early fragmentary dramatic monologue "Pilate" the protagonist wants to crucify himself in order to be released from hell. We must imagine Hopkins himself speaking:

And find a flint, a fang of ice,
Or fray a granite from the precipice:
When this is sought trees will be wanting not,
And I shall shape one to my thought.

Thus I shall make a cross, and in't
Will add a footrest there to stand,
And with sharp flint will part my feet and dint
The point fast in, and my left hand
Lock with my right; then knot a barken band
To hold me quite fix'd in the selfsame plight;
And thus I will thrust in my right:--

I'll take in hand the blady stone
And to my palm the point apply,
And press it down, on either side a bone,
With hope, with shut eyes, fixedly;
Thus crucified as I did crucify.

(Poems, 119)

of his life.⁵

It is very rewarding to focus briefly on the structure of the Spiritual Exercises. This manual for meditation and prayers is divided into four weeks with the preceding "Principle of Foundation" in which the basic rules of the Exercises are collected:

Man was created to praise, reverence and serve God Our Lord, and by so doing to save his soul. And the other things on the face of the earth were created for man's sake and to help him in the carrying out of the end for which he was created. Hence it follows that man should make use of creatures so far as they help him to attain his end and withdraw from them so far as they hinder him from so doing (Sermons, 122).

In the First Week Ignatius confronts man with everybody's sinfulness. The Second Week sets down before us the life of Christ in order to kindle the desire of imitating Him. The Third Week is a consideration of the Passion and Death of Christ; and in the Fourth Week Ignatius has the exercitant meditate on Christ's Resurrection. Every exercise is made up of three elements: the 'Composition of the Place' applies the

⁵ With Hopkins' working on the Spiritual Exercises the almost impenetrable darkness around his conception of imagination can be enlightened. Hopkins distinguishes between two kinds of imagination: first there is proper, "intellectual" imagination (the one I called especially 'Hopkinsian') which stands for memory "towards things future or things unknown or imaginary" (Sermons, 174, cf. chapter 3, p. 36, footnote 9). Then there is the quasi-Romantic "lower" imagination (the one I preferred to call 'sacramental vision' or 'intuitive insight'. This second kind of imagination reconstitutes past events as present actualities. It therefore causes Hopkins' cognitive-visionary ecstasy while "inscaping" an object immature as well as it stands for the Ignatian "seeing with the eyes of the imagination" that conjures up events and scenes from Christ's life at the beginning of every Spiritual Exercise: "Imaginentur--Here St. Ignatius does speak of the lower, not the intellectual, imagination" (Sermons, 205, cf. also 136).

five senses in order to recreate the subject of the meditation in rich detail. The 'Moral Analysis' uses the intellectual powers of memory, understanding and will to draw forth virtuous attitudes. In the 'Colloquy', finally, the meditation culminates in a free conversation between God and man; all spatial and temporal distinctions between the exercitant and the Biblical event vanish: Christ and man are one.

Evidently Hopkins was most taken in by the first element of a Spiritual Exercise, the 'Composition of Place' by means of which he could indulge over and over again in the forming of concrete images out of long gone or abstract matter and thus actively strive towards the actual and real apprehension of spiritual truth and perfection.⁶ The only difference between the Ignatian "seeing the spot" and "inscape's" intuitive insight is that the former lacks the concrete object of perception in which vision takes place and form. What Hopkins writes of the 'Composition of Place', however, that "it is always a reality, even when the story, the historia, is not history" (Sermons, 179), goes for sacramental vision and "inscape" too. The two meditative activities also have their substantiality and palpability in common. Here "A Meditation

⁶ The record of the St. Beuno Essay Society for Saturday, April 28, 1877 reads as follows: "The last meeting of the Academy for this session was held this evening... . About 16 were present to hear Mr G. Hopkins read a paper on "The Composition of Place in the Spiritual Exercises". The essayist maintained that 1. the composition was always of a real, never a fictitious place. 2. it is not principally intended to keep the mind from wandering or to assist the imagination. 3. its true object is to make the Exercitant present in spirit at the scenes, persons, etc. so that they may really act on him and he on them" (quoted in: Alfred Thomas, op. cit., 1967, 178). It is noteworthy that this was the only speech Hopkins ever delivered for the Essay Academy.

on Hell", the fifth Exercise of the First Week is an excellent case in point:

The first point will be to see with the eyes of the imagination those huge fires, and the souls as it were in bodies of fire.
The second, to hear with the ears the wailings, the groans, the cries, the blasphemies against Christ our Lord and all His Saints.
The third, to smell with the sense of smell, the brimstone, the filth and the corruption.
The fourth, to taste with the sense of taste of bitter things, such as tears, sadness and the worm of conscience.
The fifth, to feel with the sense of touch how those fires touch and burn the souls (Sermons, 136).

Every mental prayer of the Ignatian method of meditation, the 'composition', the 'analysis', and the 'colloquy', aims at and results in a successful communication between God and man and, as a consequence, imitates the incarnated Christ's endeavor to bridge the gap between the human and the divine. Yet another effort that deals the self right out also mediates this gulf, viz. the effort of image-making in the process of poetic creation. Both meditative imagination and poetic vision linguistically incarnate the Word within the word, constituting the attainment of an imitation of Christ. Poetry, for this reason, gives "inscape" its aesthetic dimension back; and art which is always said to be imitation, becomes in Hopkins' special case the imitation of Christ.

Two Equivalent Unions of Contrast:

Christ's Incarnation and its Imitation by the Creation of the Poem

"Poetry", Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren declare

puts us back in touch with the freshness of things;
and, for people living in an urbanized modern so-

ciety, poetry becomes a means for, among other things, restoring our originally unprejudiced life of the senses.⁷

The world in which Gerard Manley Hopkins lived was comparatively urbanized and modern, and his poetry can therefore be generally considered an equally appropriate means to relate his self to nature which is Christ's self. In other words, poetic creation--and in particular Hopkins' St. Beuno poetry--is an ideal way to imitate Christ Incarnate. The fact that, on the one hand, Hopkins constantly mentions his anxiety to write,⁸ and that he, on the other hand, ostentatiously uses expressions in his poetry that allude to spoken or written communication⁹ clearly suggest that his urge to create is rooted in something more than merely subconscious motivation.

⁷ Cleanth Brooks, and Robert Penn Warren, Understanding Poetry, New York, 1976, 68

⁸ Right after his conversion in 1868 Hopkins wrote to his friend Baillie: "I want to write still and as a priest I very likely can do that too" (Further Letters, 231). This attitude did not greatly change although, in retrospect, Hopkins was also aware of the restrictions inflicted on him by his order. The following excerpt dates from 1881: "I destroyed the verse I had written when I entered the Society and meant to write no more; [...] However I shall in my present mind, continue to compose, as occasion shall fairly allow, which I am afraid will be seldom and indeed for some years past has been scarcely ever, and let what I produce wait and take its chance" (Correspondence with Dixon, 88).

⁹ Cf. The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanza 18: "make words break from me here all alone, / Do you!" (Poems, 57), or stanza 29:

Ah! there was a heart right!
There was single eye!
Read the unshapeable shock night
And knew the who and the why;
Wording it how but by him that present and past,
Heaven and earth are word of, worded by?--

(Poems, 61)

Linguistic utterance, preferably of the poetic kind, virtually relates Hopkins to the Incarnation apprehended in nature. "Inscapes" thereby turn into expressions of a vernacular: "their tops [the elms'] are touched and worded with leaf" (Journals, 243); and the perception of these "inscapes" becomes a literary activity: "I read a broad careless inscape" (Journals, 218). The Incarnation causes the perfect fusion of nature and literature: "I looked at some flying shafted ashes-- there was one especially of single sonnet-like inscape--" (Journals, 259).¹⁰

It is the Incarnation in terms of which everything in life (including poetic creation) takes on significance and is ultimately determined.

And my life is determined by the Incarnation down to most of the details of the day. Now this being so that I cannot even stop it, why should I not make the cause that determines my life, both as a whole and in much detail, determine it in greater detail still and to the greater efficiency of what I in any case should do, and to my greater happiness in doing it? (Sermons, 263, emphasis mine).

Thus, if Hopkins felt the need to do anything,--and I assume there was a positive need for him to write poetry--it was intended to imitate the Incarnation of Christ. Now it becomes comprehensible why Scotus' unusual theory of the Incarnation, viz. that it would have happened without man's Fall, had such a powerful effect on Hopkins: the Incarnation was not simply the means of man's redemption but additionally laid the foun-

¹⁰ Cf. also Journals, 163: "A budded lime against the field wall: turn, pose, and counterpoint in the twigs and buds-- the form speaking", and Journals, 195: "I noticed it before me squalentem, coat below coat, sketched in intersecting edges bearing 'idiom', all down the slope"

dation of Hopkins' poetic creation. Thus, by producing a work of art, man fulfills the chief purpose of his being: the Imitatio Christi which in its most general form means the glorification of God: "Let your light shine before men that they may see your good works (say of art) and glorify yr. Father in heaven" (Letters to Bridges, 231).¹¹

Hopkins' poetry is particularly incarnational and mimetic in so far as it metonymically realizes the poet's personal experience of the divine presence; it is not only about the Incarnation, but is also itself that very thing. Just as the Incarnation represents the culmination of being, the created world, by analogy, finds its fullest articulation in human linguistic competence.¹² My principal postulation then is that there is in Hopkins no such thing as "the tragic limitation of poetic language";¹³ for the Word itself can be said and established by means of the word because the creation of the text corresponds to the concrete Incarnation of Christ

¹¹ Hopkins' view of literary criticism can also be put into this context. He thought of Christ as the "only just literary critic, who prizes, is proud of and admires, more than any man, more than the receiver himself can, the gifts of his own making" (Correspondence with Dixon, 4). This idea is obvious and logical: Christ as the personification of the ideal aim of imitation is of course the best judge of all attempts to reach this goal, such as literary creation.

¹² The idea that Hopkins' poetry imitates the specified ideal of the divine and thus gains access to it--a limited access, though, as will be seen below--is based on the current 19th century theory that language is a divine revelation whose basic metaphysical assumption is that language and nature are mirrors reflecting each other.

¹³ J. Hillis Miller, "The linguistic Moment in 'The Wreck of the Deutschland'", in The New Criticism and After, ed. by Th. Young, Charlottesville, 1976, 56).

and is a kind of 'back-incarnation': the Flesh becomes Word again; through imitation the word turns into God's Word, which the poet perceives in nature. Thus the poet brings the Word back to its origins of mysterious, exclusively linguistic, pre-existence: in the beginning there was the Word.¹⁴ God's creation (the world and Christ¹⁵) and the poet's creation (the poem) are equivalent utterances of self; (Christ's) birth and (the poet's) speech are incontestably united by means of the analogy between the acts of God and Hopkins' mimetic acts of celebration.¹⁶

The extreme importance Hopkins imparted to the concrete mimetic function of his writing poetry by far surpasses the opinion of those numerous Hopkins scholars who commonly reduce the evident analogy between the "inscapes" Hopkins saw in nature and the "inscapes" he created in poetry to the onomatopoetic element of his verse; for the prosodic and rhetorical devices, the 'sound' of Hopkins' verse is much more

¹⁴ This attitude recalls Plato's view of inspiration which he regarded as the soul's remembering of what it once saw in the heaven of ideas.

¹⁵ "God's utterance of himself in himself is God the Word, outside himself is the world. This world then is word, expression, news of God. Therefore its end, its purpose, its purport, its meaning, is God and its life or work to name and praise him" (Sermons, 129).

¹⁶ Diagram 1:

IDEAL

God's utterance in himself	=	Word
" " outside	=	world

CHRIST'S INCARNATION
(to praise God)

IMITATION

Poet's utterance in himself	=	word
" " outside	=	world

POEM/LINGUISTIC INCARNATION (to praise God)

than "an echo to the sense":¹⁷ Hopkins' early treatise on "Poetic Diction" already connects the notions of "chromatic" and "diatonic" beauty--which were originally used for observations in nature--with literary creation in general and its figures of speech in particular.

To the marked or abrupt kind of parallelism belong metaphor, simile, parable, and so on, where the effect is sought in likeness of things, and antithesis, contrast, and so on, where it is sought in unlikeness. To the chromatic parallelism belong gradation, intensity, climax, tone, expression (as the word is used in music), chiaroscuro, perhaps emphasis (Journals, 85).

From the beginning, Hopkins' principle of unity-in-variety is valid for "inscapes" in nature as well as in art.¹⁸ It is the recurrence of difference which produces natural form, and it is the same combination of sameness and difference which governs Hopkins' ardently loved devices of rhyme, alliteration, and assonance, which, as is generally known in post-Renaissance poetic theory, constitute the very structure of verse itself.

There are two elements in the beauty rhyme has
to the mind, the likeness or sameness of sound

¹⁷ "'Tis not enough no harshness gives offense,
The sound must seem an echo to the sense."

(Alexander Pope, An Essay on Criticism)

¹⁸ It should be borne in mind that for Hopkins art meant poetry above all. Poetry is essentially different from prose or ordinary language by a greater concentration of meaning and imagery, that is "marked parallelism": "it is plain that metre, rhythm, rhyme, and all the structure which is called verse both necessitate and engender a difference in diction and in thought. The effect of verse is one on expression and on thought, viz. concentration and all which is implied by this" (Journals, 84). Hopkins' preference for diatonism over chromatism (cf. chapter 2) thus explains his special liking for the use of dense, metaphorical language in his poetry.

and the unlikeness or difference of meaning ("Rhythm and the Other Structural Parts of Rhetoric--Verse", Journals, 286)

This need for repetition with variation as we generally find it in poetic language is in Hopkins' case an attempt at a faultless linguistic mirroring of the world full of piedness, i.e. of things that metaphysically rhyme by mingling likeness and unlikeness: "All beauty may by a metaphor be called rhyme" ("On the Origin of Beauty", Journals, 102). Poetry thus becomes nature just as the act of writing the text becomes an immaculate instance of the imitation of Christ Who is immanent in nature.¹⁹

Hopkins' poetic "inscape" does not only formally reflect nature "inscape".²⁰ Neither is it only relevant to the ways in which it envisions itself although Hopkins, in his theoretical discussions of poetry, considers the essence of his creativity

¹⁹ In an excellent article that develops ideas of Northrop Frye, Walter Ong extends the spatial analogy between repetition in nature and repetition in poetry by the element of time: "the preoccupation of poetry and art in general with repetition is shown at its deepest level in the constant resort to the natural cycle of the year" (Walter J. Ong, "Evolution, Myth, and Poetic Vision" in: Comparative Literature Studies 3, 1966, 2). It is worth noticing here that this microcosmic urge of poetic sound patterns towards periodic repetition is paralleled by Hopkins' poetry which, on a macrocosmic level, by and large follows the pattern of day and night: the Oxford verse is the poetics of promising dawn, the Wreck of the Deutschland and the St. Beuno poems celebrate nature in bright daylight; the 'parish work poems' change the scenery into the darker environment of a house ("Felix Randal", "Brothers") or the weirdness of oncoming dusk ("Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves"), whereas Dublin brings along the sonnets of nightly desolation.

²⁰ The idea that nature "inscapes" and poetic "inscapes" are basically the same is essentially Romantic and originates in Coleridge's conception of a dynamic imagination--though Hopkins' analogy goes much further.

to be verbal rather than visual and accordingly emphasizes expression as the truer way of regarding composition by comparison with thought. This attitude ends up in a seemingly final denunciation and denial of the importance of meaning.

Poetry is speech framed for contemplation of the mind by the way of hearing or speech framed to be heard for its own sake and interest even over and above its interest of meaning. Some matter and meaning is essential to it but only as an element necessary to support and employ the shape which is contemplated for its own sake. (Poetry is in fact speech only employed to carry the inscape of speech for the inscape's sake...) ("Poetry and Verse", Journals, 289).

Yet it must be accentuated that this remark was written at a time (1873/74) when Hopkins had not yet consciously developed the full analogy between the "inscapes" in nature and in poetry. Therefore I would like to argue once again that Hopkins' thought is undistinguishable from expression, his obsession with the "inscape" of words, which we already encounter in his earliest diaries, is inevitably accompanied by what is behind pure form; the equivalence of poetic and natural "inscapes" is not only formal but refers to meaning too: "parallelism in expression tends to beget or passes into parallelism in thought" ("Poetic Diction", Journals, 85).²¹

Therefore all poetic parallelisms like rhyme, alliteration, assonance, and further structural properties of verse (rhythm, meter) which may be seen to unite the contrasts of sameness and difference are not exclusively defined by their existence as sounds, but work their way into the meaning structure of the work of art as well. As a matter of fact they bind togeth-

²¹ Cf. the commentaries on form and meaning in chapter 1 and 4 (Scotus).

er and unify related images by a semantical link too, which provides the beauty of rhyme with the sameness of meaning in addition to the suggested "sameness of sound" and "difference of meaning". Rhyme by linking lines and words, and alliteration and assonance by linking parts of words as well as syllables enforce a juxtaposition of sense.²²

Hopkins' use of sound-"inscapes" was then not so far "over and above the interest of meaning" as he thought it was, because he managed to bring together opposite aspects of the same object and thus overcame the 'paradox of "inscape"' by linguistic means such as alliteration:²³ "swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim," ("Pied Beauty", Poems, 70); that contrasts are reconciled in God is set forth in the same way: "God! ... / World's strand, sway of the sea [...] Thou art lightning and love, I found it, a winter and warm; [...] with a sovereignty that heeds but hides, bodes but abides;" (The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanzas 1, 9, 32, Poems, 51, 54, 62). Where direct alliteration is not possible as with "first" and "last" Hopkins achieves a fusion through a portmanteau-word: "Christ ... Their ransom, their rescue, and first, fast, last friend" ("The Lantern Out of Doors", Poems, 71).

This sensitivity towards the semantical relations of rhymes and other sound parallelisms is likewise brought into promi-

²² W.K. Wimsatt in The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry (Louisville, 1954) demonstrates convincingly that the poetic function of rhyme is to deliver words from their purely referential role and to indicate the syntactic and semantic interrelations between the elements of the rhyme: likeness of sound purports to imitate a similarity of meaning. This attitude was equally set forth by Hopkins' early etymological speculations based on the assumption that words that sound the same are also similar in meaning (see above all Journals, 4-50).

²³ Cf. chapter 2, pp. 15-6

nence by Hopkins' bold repetition (with variation) of significant words: "Look at the grey lawns cold where gold, where quickgold lies!" ("The Starlight Night", Poems, 66), clauses: "Look at the stars! look, look up at the skies!" (ibid.), or whole stanzaic units: the hopeful "Golden Echo" imitates a counterpoint of meaning which questions the "Leaden Echo's" feelings that there is no means to keep beauty back from vanishing away (Poems, 91).

In order to summarize it can be maintained that in Hopkins' poems the union of contrasts operates on three different but closely related levels which are equally efficient and meaningful: in the formal expression or rhyme proper (rhyme, alliteration, etc.), in the imagery or rhyme in nature (choice of metaphors, etc.), and in the thought or supernatural rhyme which is divided into "overthought" and "underthought".²⁴ The crucial "overthought" of Hopkins' poetry is the union of transcendence and transitoriness in the Incarnation of Christ; and I daresay that its "underthought" is the imitation of Christ's Incarnation by the poet's literary creation.

The versatile applicability of the notion of "inscape" makes merge into each other the spatial sensations of the eye (in the form of sacramental vision) and the temporal sensations of

²⁴ "My thought is that in any lyric passage ... there are ... two strains of thought running together and like counterpointed; the overthought that which everybody, editors, see [...] and which might for instance be abridged or paraphrased in square marginal blocks as in some books carefully written; the other, the underthought, conveyed chiefly in the choice of metaphors etc. used and often only half realised by the poet himself, not necessarily having any connection with the subject in hand but usually having a connection and suggested by some circumstance of the scene or of the story" (Further Letters, 252).

the ear (in the form of poetic sound) so that vision is brought into an acoustic form and sound simultaneously gets a sacramental meaning. In other words, form and meaning of what Hopkins perceives in nature are actualized in the poem. Poetry thus adds a new dimension to the Word: it turns It into something not only to be seen but also to be heard: "Faith, then, depends on hearing" (Romans, 10 / 14-7). A full apprehension of the Incarnation requires an unrestricted, complete, application of the two reigning senses. By thus building the Romantic idea that lyric poetry should aspire to the expressiveness of music (ut musica poesis) into the concept, Hopkins' poetry acquires the status of ut pictura musicaque poesis. Furthermore, Hopkins finds a way to make the self a part of the unification of the Word and the word in so far as the act of poetic creation along with its product obviously imitate what his poetry itself stands for: the Incarnation of Christ.

The previous chapter has already briefly alluded to the point that the mystery of Christ perceived in nature so affected Hopkins to the depths of his being that it got involved in the creative process by functioning as the fundamental impulse or "instress" in his heart: "My heart in hiding stirred for a bird" ("The Windhover", Poems, 69). He witnesses the death of the five Nuns in the Deutschland as an "inscape" of salvation that brings forth the "madrigal start" of song at the same time; optical impression ("inscape"/"instress") leads to acoustic expression or "inscape", "the good" the poet has "of his own":

Ah, touched in your bower of bone,
Are you! turned for an exquisite smart,
Have you! make words break from me here all alone,
Do you!--mother of being in me, heart.

O unteachably after evil, but uttering truth,
Why, tears! is it? tears; such a melting, a madrigal start!
Never-elderling revel and river of youth,
What can it be, this glee? the good you have there of your own?
The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanza 18 (Poems, 57)

The act of writing serves not simply to preserve the experience of vision but to complete it while perfecting the Imitatio Christi.

When the first faculty just does its office and falls back, barely naming what it apprehends, it scarcely gives birth to the second but when it keeps on the strain ... it cannot but continuously beget it. This faculty not identifies but verifies; takes the measure of things, brings word of them" (Sermons, 174).²⁵

The deeper Hopkins penetrates into nature by means of his sacralizing vision, the more deeply he also gets involved with language and its dynamics, that is to say, Hopkins' linguistic utterances take on ecstatic features as soon as they touch upon the thought level of "inscape": "The Lantern out of Doors" begins in a smooth matter-of-fact tone describing man's mortality, but then it develops into a soul-stirring, stutter-like staccato when Christ is introduced in the last tercet:

"The Lantern out of Doors"

Sometimes a lantern moves along the night.

That interests our eyes. And who goes there?

I think; where from and bound, I wonder, where,
With, all down darkness wide, his wading light?

²⁵ When "the prized, the desirable sight, unsought, presented so easily, / Parted me leaf and leaf, divided me, eyelid and eyelid of slumber", the stimuli in nature make the persona's eyes slowly open in the morning allowing extensive vision, but they also "parted me leaf and leaf" of what he expresses on paper. "Leaf" stands for the open eye as well as for the written page ("Moonrise, June 19 1876", Poems, 176).

Men go by me whom either beauty bright
In mould or mind or what not else makes rare;
The rain against our much-thick and marsh air
Rich beams, till death or distance buys them quite.

Death or distance soon consumes them: wind
What most I may eye after, be in at the end
I cannot, and out of sight is out of mind.

Christ minds: Christ's interest, what to avow or amend
There, eyes them, heart wants, care haunts, foot follows kind,
Their ransom, their rescue, and first, fast, last friend.

(Poems, 71)

Evidently "inscape" has a lot in common with inspiration. They both share the aesthetic and ethical aspects which in turn evoke the same aesthetic and ethical features of the resulting work of art. To begin with, there is a formal inspiration generally referring to rhyme and rhythm, which will be dealt with in the next sections of this chapter when there will be question of "sprung rhythm" and Hopkins' classification of poetic styles. Then there is the inspiration which Hopkins thought was of the highest spiritual order, the original light for the mind and the whole soul.

The word inspiration need cause no difficulty. I mean by it a mood of great, abnormal in fact, mental acuteness, either energetic or receptive, according as the thoughts which arise in it seem generated by a stress and action of the brain, or to strike into it unasked (Further Letters, 216).

This "mental acuteness" sows the seeds of the above-mentioned state of ecstatic "inscaping" which produces the poem: Hopkins describes "Hurrahing in Harvest" as the "outcome of half an hour of extreme enthusiasm" (Letters to Bridges, 56). This religious kind of inspiration draws a parallel to the semantic aspect of "inscape", because the poet employs the biblical sense of the word spiritus (inspiration) as God-given breath which stands at the beginning of any creative act,

such as the spirit breathed into man in the creation of Adam, or the "arch and original breath of lovely death" that promises a new and eternal life for the drowning nuns of the Deutschland (stanza 25, Poems, 59), or precisely the inspiration preceding the creation of the poem itself.²⁶ For this reason man's creative power is the result of God's grace bestowed "for the moment" (Sermons, 154):

When a man has given himself to God's service, when he has denied himself and followed Christ, he has fitted himself to receive and does receive from God a special guidance, a more particular providence.. This guidance is conveyed partly by the action of other men, as his appointed superiors, and partly by direct lights and inspirations. If I wait for such guidance, through whatever channel conveyed, about anything, about my poetry for instance, I do more wisely in every way than if I try to serve my own seeming interests in the matter. Now if you value what I write, if I do myself, much more does our Lord (Correspondence with Dixon, 93).

Although Hopkins, in passive lingering, "must absolutely have encouragement as much as crops rain" (Letters to Bridges, 219), that is to say, although he must wait for the grace of inspiration until it is 'due', he then has to answer with the corresponding play of the "elective will". When inspired, the poet has to use the arbitrium, is forced to act according to God's will.

And even the sigh or aspiration itself is in answer to an inspiration of God's spirit and is followed by the continuance and expiration of that same breath which lifts it, through the gulf and void between pitch and pitch of being, to do or be what God wishes his creature to do or be (Sermons, 156)
[...]

²⁶ Cf. Psalm 103 /30: "Then thou sendest forth thy spirit, and there is fresh creation."

God's forestalling of man's action by prevenient grace, which carries with it a consenting of man's will, seems to stand to the action of free choice which follows and to which, by its continued strain and breathing on and man's responding aspiration or drawing in of breath, it leads / as the creation of man and angels in sanctifying grace stands to the act by which they entered with God into the covenant and commonwealth of original justice (ibid., 157).

The choice of the good and right thing is the creative activity of the poet's spirit and faith that complete God's "elevating" and "uncreated" grace, which "lifts the receiver from one cleave of being to another and to a vital act in Christ" (Sermons, 158).²⁷

Hopkins appropriately carries on the imagery of breath when he speaks of God's prevenient grace as "a continued strain and breathing on" man's actions, and man's response as a "drawing in of breath". Aspiration rejoins and therefore imitates inspiration, or, as Heraclitus cryptically put it: "The way up and down is one and the same".²⁸ This is why Hopkins' writings and in particular the St. Beuno poetry, are filled with a dramatic sense of action and accomplishment whereas, in other respects, he found it hard to get anything done.²⁹

²⁷ The vertical movement is very prominent here. Just as a tree grows upwards in response to life-giving water, poetry is called forth by the grace of inspiration, the "milk to the mind": "Is anything a milk to the mind so, so sighs deep / Poetry to it, as a tree whose boughs break in the sky" ("Ashboughs"), Poems, 185). Cf. also next paragraphs.

²⁸ "Fragment 103", in Charles H. Kahn, op.cit., 75

²⁹ In his correspondence, Hopkins mentions innumerable poetic or scientific projects he was planning to execute or actually working on; virtually none of those was ever realized. Apparently real inspiration which provoked an imitating creative act only came to him in Wales, where St. Beuno

Since inspiration, for Hopkins, is a device analogous to "inscape", and since poetic creation signifies an imitation of Christ, the poem must be a 'linguistic incarnation' sharing all the characteristics of the Incarnation of Christ; or, in other words, the poet must reach a level of action which is equivalent to Christ's in so far as the Imitatio Christi is a constituent inherent in writing poetry by means of uniting contrasts. Corresponding to Christ's unifying powers, this process occurs again in the spheres of the interworld which the previous chapter pointed out: the coming into being of Christ and of the poem have the same origin and lead both to a state of perfect stability and equilibrium. In his remarkable sonnet, dealing with the creative process and its termination, "To R.B." (dedicated to his life-long friend and fellow-poet Robert Bridges), Hopkins describes the poem as brought forth by the meeting of the paternal element of "delight"/"insight"/"inspiration" and the maternal element of the (poetic) "mind".

"To R.B."

The fine delight that fathers thought; the strong
Spur, live and lancing like the blowpipe flame,
Breathes once and, quenched faster than it came,
Leaves yet the mind a mother of immortal song.

Nine months she then, nay years, nine years she long
Within her wears, bears, cares and combs the same:
The widow of an insight lost she lives, with aim
Now known and hand at work now never wrong.

Sweet fire the sire of muse, my soul needs this;
I want the one rapture of an inspiration.
O then if in my lagging lines you miss

The roll, the rise, the carol, the creation,
My winter world, that scarcely breathes that bliss
Now, yields you, with some sighs, our explanation.

(Poems, 108)

is located: "It is now years that I have had no inspiration of longer jet than makes a sonnet, except only in that fortnight in Wales" (Letters to Bridges, 270).

Hopkins likens the moment of the poem's creation to the instant of conception, obviously the conception of Christ which used to be represented in medieval paintings by one and the same coming together of heavenly inspiration and earthly mind: a lance-like shaft of flame from a star enters the Virgin Mary's head. The Incarnation of Christ and the creation of the poetic text are equivalent events.³⁰

It is not surprising then that Hopkins compares the Virgin Mary as the spotless mother of grace from whom Christ the Word issued, with the air we breathe,

³⁰ Renaissance paintings showing the conception of Christ:



Carlo Crivelli
(from Clifton
Harby, The Bible
in Art, New York,
1936)

i.e. with the immaculate atmosphere of inspiration through which God came and still comes to man and through which the innocent poem is equally brought forth.³¹



Roger Van der Weyden,
(from: Henry van Dyke,
The Christ Child in
Art: A Study of In-
terpretation, New
York, 1894, 33)

³¹ Milton, a constant influence in Hopkins, also hints at the Holy Virgin's being the inspiration of poetic song:

If answerable style I can obtain
Of my Celestial Patroness, who deigns
Her nightly visitation unimplor'd,
And dedicates to me slumb'ring, or inspires
Easy my unpremeditated Verse:

Paradise Lost IX/ 20-4, (Milton, 236)

This air, which, by life's law,
My lung must draw and draw
Now but to breathe its praise,
Minds me in many ways
Of her who not only
Gave God's infinity
Dwindled to infancy
Welcome in womb and breast,
Birth, milk, and all the rest
But mothers each new grace
That does now reach our race--
Mary Immaculate,

"The Blessed Virgin compared to the Air we Breathe"
(Poems, 94, emphasis mine)

It is in the "airy cages" ("Binsey Poplars"), the "bright boroughs" ("The Starlight Night") of the interworld where the gulf between heaven and earth is bridged in order to represent the concrete Incarnation of Christ. It is in precisely the same spheres where precisely the same contrast is overcome in order to lay before our eyes the explicit genesis of the text: "But many a silver visionary spark / Springs in the floating air", Hopkins exclaimed in an early fragment ("When eyes that cast about in heights of heaven", Poems, 159); this is the "spark" of creative utterance given off by all things in nature that embrace sacramental meaning: "All things are charged with love, charged with God and if we know how to touch them give off sparks and take fire, yield drops and flow, ring and tell of him" (Sermons, 195, emphasis mine).

The imagery Hopkins uses for the union of contrasts holds also true for the release of the poem. The rainbow as mediating link between heaven and earth is a case in point:

While sheeny tears and sunlit mirth
Mix o'er the not unmoved earth,--
Then would I fling me up to sip
Sweetness from the hour, and dip
Deeply in the arched lustres,
And look abroad on sunny clusters

Of wringing tree-tops, chalky lanes,
Wheatfields tumbled with the rains,
Streaks of shadow, thistled leas,
Whence spring the jewell'd harmonies
That meet in mid-air; and be so
Melted in the dizzy bow
That I may drink that ecstasy
Which to pure souls alone may be....

"Il Mystico", 129-42, (Poems, 115, emphasis mine)

The "jewell'd harmonies" not only refer to colors, but, by analogy, also to sound. This fact is confirmed by another poetic rainbow scenario: "The sun on falling waters writes the text / Which yet is in the eye or in the thought" ("It was a hard thing to undo this knot", Poems, 130).³²

Love is another example of intimate communication between opposites to beget the text; the desire to come as close to Christ as possible induces Hopkins to write poetry, but, time and again, this creativity is thwarted.

I cannot in conscience spend time on poetry, neither have I the inducements and inspirations that make others compose. Feeling, love in particular, is the great moving power and spring of verse and the only person that I am in love with seldom, especially now, stirs my heart sensibly and when he does I cannot always 'make capital' of it, it would be a sacrilege to do so (Letters to Bridges, 66).

Revealingly enough, the image of the bird, by means of its capacity of singing, comes up again as the symbol which iden-

³² That the origin of poetic song lies in "mid-air", that an Aeolian harp, so to speak, is to engender the poem, is of course a thoroughly Romantic idea which Hopkins already expresses in an early entry in his diary when he asks: "Where is the tongue / Which drives the stony air to utterance?" (Journals, 67). Yet the sublimity of Romantic inspiration suggests an intrusion from outside the material world; Blake's "blue regions of the air, / Where the melodious winds have birth" ("To the Muses") also indicates a grace, but in the form of a sudden flash from beyond (William Blake, The Complete Poetry and Prose, ed. by David V. Erdman, Berkeley, 1982, 417).

tifies Christ's Incarnation with its imitation by the poet's linguistic incarnation.³³ It is the bird that gives expression to the "visionary spark" in the air and thereby transforms the union of heaven and earth into vocal sound.

But many a silver visionary spark
Springs in the floating air and the skies swim,--
Then often the ears in a new fashion hark,
Beside them, about the hedges, hearing him:
At last the bird is found a flickering shape and slim.

(Poems, 159)

Several times Hopkins distinguishes the birds' spiral ascent by the ambiguous name of "ringing".³⁴ This coinage, used above all in the last century of hawks, associates the bird in flight with the uttering of sound. Thus "The Windhover's" triumph over the wind in the sonnet's octet matches the poet's successful struggling with words, which secures the right answer to the heavenly inspiration. The product of these efforts, the bird's song (which is at the same time Christ's message and the poet's text) provoke a strong "instress" in any observer/listener: "and thrush / Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring / The ear, it strikes like lightnings to hear him sing" ("Spring", Poems, 67, emphasis mine).

If we follow further the relation of Christ's Incarnation being the model for the operation of poetry, we

³³ Hopkins makes no exception in a long tradition: Keats' nightingale, Shelley's skylark and many more birds of English literature have become the emblem of the poet's own voice.

³⁴ "... he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing" ("The Windhover", Poems, 69); "Round a ring, around a ring / And while I sail (must listen) I sing" ("The Woodlark", Poems, 177). See also "The Sea and the Skylark" (Poems, 68).

notice that the perception of nature "inscapes" and the reading of poetry "inscapes" are correlative activities producing an insight into the sacramental truth of nature as well as an understanding of the Incarnation and the mimetic presence of poetry; both are cognitive processes within the observer/reader caused by "instress" emanating from the object/text. Hopkins claims for himself unmediated, undivided vision along with understanding of nature: "With a companion the eye and the ear are for the most part shut and instress cannot come" (Journals, 228).³⁵ Yet Hopkins does not fully rule out vision for observers other than himself. There follows the conclusion that everybody is able to imitate Christ; everybody can be a poet.

I thought how sadly beauty of inscape was unknown
and buried away from simple people and yet how near
at hand it was if they had eyes to see it and it
could be called out everywhere again (Journals, 221).

Hopkins' poetry, by contrast, sets the didactic function of a mediated vision. Both unmediated and mediated vision are destined primarily to create faith within the observer/reader; the Incarnation of Christ and the creation of the imitative text have the same target: man. This fact gives rise to Hopkins' equivocal attitude towards personal fame, which is a puzzle throughout the whole of Hopkins criticism. The Jesuit doctrine, on the one hand, forbids its members to pursue activities other than spiritual: those who have joined the Society must devote themselves to the study of solid and

³⁵ Cf. also Journals, 182: "Even with one companion ecstasy is almost banished."

perfect virtues and spiritual things and regard these as more important than learning or other natural human gifts (Rule 16). Accordingly, Hopkins wrote to Dixon in 1881: "But there is more peace and it is the holier lot to be unknown than to be known (Correspondence with Dixon, 89), because "individual fame St. Ignatius looked on as the most dangerous and dazzling of all attractions" (ibid., 93-4). Bridges, five years later, received a similar explanation: "Art and its fame do not really matter, spiritually they are nothing, virtue is the only good" (Letters to Bridges, 231). Yet in exactly the same two letters Hopkins speaks of the "loathsomeness I have shown in making it" [the sacrifice of hopes of fame] (Correspondence with Dixon, 88), and adds another remarkable statement in the letter to Bridges:

To produce then is of little use unless what we produce is known, if known widely known, the wider known the better, for it is by being known it works, it influences, it does its duty, it does good. We must then try to be known, aim at it, take means to it (Letters to Bridges, 231).

Hopkins obviously oscillates between two opposite attitudes towards creating a text that can both be derived from St. Ignatius' "Principle and Foundation": to spread the Word by holding the act of writing in reverence as a glorification of God ("Man was created to praise", Sermons, 122) and to avoid personal recognition through publication ("We do not on our part seek for honour rather than dishonour", ibid.). Yet, in Hopkins, there always shines through a thought justifying both his own work and his creative role by a theory of Christian imitation. Works of art, just like Christ, educate and set standards; both Christ and the poem are supposed

to have the same Orphic power of what Hopkins called "bidding".

I mean the art or virtue of saying everything right to or at the hearer, interesting him, holding him in the attitude of correspondent or addressed or at least concerned, making it everywhere an act of intercourse--and of discarding everything that does not bid, does not tell (Letters to Bridges, 160).

The poem-"inscape" therefore had to be brought home to the reader with the maximal "instress" of actual speech.³⁶ The text becomes a rhetorical and oratorical means of supreme and redeeming persuasion, "an ark / For the listener" (The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanza 33, Poems, 62), solely worked out for the sake of its impact: "Any subject may be chosen for its art value alone and so will not, or rather need not, be any scandal in the writer or reader. The question however is the practical effect" (Further Letters, 228). Priest and poet join the arms of persuasive power in order to "help on the knowledge of the Incarnation" (Sermons, 263), and to change, in Cardinal Newman's terminology, mere "notional assent" into "real assent":

I am going to preach tomorrow and put plainly to a Highland congregation of MacDonalds, MacIntoshes, MacKillops, and the rest what I am putting not at all so plainly to the rest of the world, or rather to you and Canon Dixon, in a sonnet in sprung rhythm with two codas (Letters to Bridges, 279).

³⁶ Cf. Hopkins' constant exhortation to read his poems "with the ears" (Letters to Bridges, 51, 79). See also section after next one. Furthermore, the relative frequency of imperatives, exclamations, interjections, questions, and other syntactical modes of "bidding" point out the 'performative orality' of Hopkins' poems.

Attempting the conversion of man is the magic issue at stake, which was also Christ's crucial mission and message: "He went out to convince and convert the world" (Sermons, 74). All of Hopkins' linguistic efforts are likewise directed to this final goal: "Indeed in coming here I began to feel a desire to do something for the conversion of Wales. I began to learn Welsh" (Journals, 258). In one breath Hopkins longed for Christ's conversion of England: "Our King back, oh, upon English souls!" (The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanza 35, Poems, 63) and his poetry's converting Bridges: "You are my public and I hope to convert you" (Letters to Bridges, 46).³⁷ The necessity to communicate and thus transmit the thoughts and emotions of the Word to others' hearts makes the greatest poet out of Christ and accordingly turns the poet's text into a perfect imitation of Christ.

He Christ is an orator and poet, as in his eloquent words and parables appears (Sermons, 35).

[...]

No stories or parables are like Christ's, so bright, so pithy, so touching; no proverbs or sayings are such jewellery: they stand off from other men's thought like stars, like lilies in the sun; nowhere in literature is there anything to match the Sermon on the Mount (ibid., 37).

It can be argued that the device of Imitatio Christi imparts on Hopkins the desire to appeal to an at least hypothetical audience that is as large as possible because Christ's life and character are such as to make up to all the world's ad-

³⁷ cf. Thomas Vaughan's conversion "from worldly courses by reading Herbert's poems" (Correspondence with Dixon, 23).

miration.³⁸ This is why Hopkins aims at being intelligible and did not wish his readers to ignore the implications of meaning.

One of two kinds of clearness one shd. have--either the meaning to be felt without effort as fast as one reads or else, if dark at first reading, when once made out to explode (Letters to Bridges, 90).

This desire to be ultimately understood, which is frequently underscored by Hopkins' meticulous explanations of his own poems in his correspondence, recalls the parallelism between the reading of the text (word) and the knowledge of Christ's mystery (Word). In the long run, though, Hopkins will come to realize that poetry is hardly to be found a serviceable means to change society. His attitude towards publication and personal fame would reach a point of rejection, a resolution which was to embrace the sacrifice of the text and, as a consequence, of the self.

The one behind: All the Way Back to the Creator

So far we have seen that there is a connection between the literary work (the poem) and the works of God (nature and Christ Incarnate) because both these creative issues represent a unification of the two clashing poles of likeness and difference on the formal level of "inscape" and of transitoriness and transcendence on the semantic level of "inscape".

³⁹ Besides, the ideal of chivalric knighthood in which Ignatius' ideas are deeply rooted includes the quest of personal glory too.

The aim of either process is the beauty and distinctiveness of the self. 'Selving', as Hopkins puts it, is not exclusively used for formal "inscapes" such as the text, or for natural "inscapes" such as "all this juice and all this joy" of "earth's sweet being" ("Spring", Poems, 67) resulting in a sacramental, Christ-incarnating apprehension of nature, but also affects human nature, "World's loveliest-men's selves" ("To what serves Mortal Beauty?", Poems, 98), i.e.

my selfbeing, my consciousness and feeling of myself, that taste of myself, of I and me above and in all things, which is more distinctive than the taste of ale or alum, more distinctive than the smell of walnutleaf or camphor, and is incommunicable by any means to another man (Sermons, 123).

The culmination of this "pitch" of being, the highest degree in the scale of self, the self of selves, is of course Christ Who in his universality embraces all other selves.³⁹ Therefore the self reaches a higher stage of development when it imitates Christ. The fact that, in Hopkins' view, the human self is presented with the choice to respond to God's grace with his own voice gives him the chance to purify his heart, the center and seat of selfhood, and to redeem his body. This choice separates man from the rest of creation.

Hopkins consciously reaches his pitch of selfhood by the creation of the text, which, as an act attributed to volition, is his answer to heavenly inspiration.⁴⁰

³⁹ "There then! the Master, / Ipse, the only one, Christ, King, Head" (The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanza 28, Poems, 60).

⁴⁰ Self can be identified with pitch towards good or bad, "determination of right and wrong" (Sermons, 148).

Therefore Hopkins' Imitatio Christi feeds on the process of cognitively achieving a creative identity whose product is a verbalization of selfhood: Christ as both aim and mark of Hopkins' creativity causes the poem to be a self-incarnation of the poet in imitation of Christ's Incarnation. The poet "in-stresses" Christ's mystery (The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanza 5, Poems, 53) and, through all, discloses the secret of his own selfbeing. This realization of self by means of the literary creation follows and supplements the above-mentioned confirmation of self-existence through the perception of existing reality outside the self:⁴¹ "Searching nature I taste self, but at one tankard, that of my own being" (Sermons, 123). Just as "inscaping" of objects in nature brings forth the consciousness of self, "inscaping" in the form of writing reveals the poet's imitating self. Consequently, Hopkins transcends the central conception of Victorian mimesis in so far as his word is self-creating; yet, unlike the Romantic poem, his word is not the free invention of a poet-god who sets out to create a whole world ex nihilo through imaginative perception.⁴² Although Hopkins' goal was a state in which the sense of self and the sense of being in Christ could no longer be distinguished: "That is Christ being me and me being Christ" (Sermons, 154), he realized that he was not a God-like prophet, but a humble servant like Christ, because he conceived of his self-existence, and for this reason also of his poetry, as coming from the "extrinsic power" of "the pitch of a great universal mind" (Sermons, 125-6).

⁴¹ Cf. chapter 2, pp. 24-5

⁴² Cf. W. David Shaw, "Mimesis as Invention" in: New Literary History 12, 1982, 303

Gradually we have switched from creation as Imitatio Christi to the creator, the one behind creation: God, the utterer of the Word, and the poet, the utterer of the word. Just as the qualities to be perceived in nature (and Christ) give evidence of their author, i.e. God, the literary artefact conceived as distinctive insight into reality always refers back to its maker, the poet who, by producing a text, lays bare and constitutes his own selfhood, his own individuality, his own "inscape":

But men of genius are said to create, a painting, a poem, a tale, a tune, a policy; not indeed the colours and the canvas, not the words or notes, but the design, the character, the air, the plan. How then?--from themselves, from their own minds (Sermons, 238).

This oneness of the poet and the poem which has been demonstrated in terms of selving is therefore a reflection of the perfect identification of God, this "more exquisite determining, selfmaking, power" (Sermons, 125), with Christ:

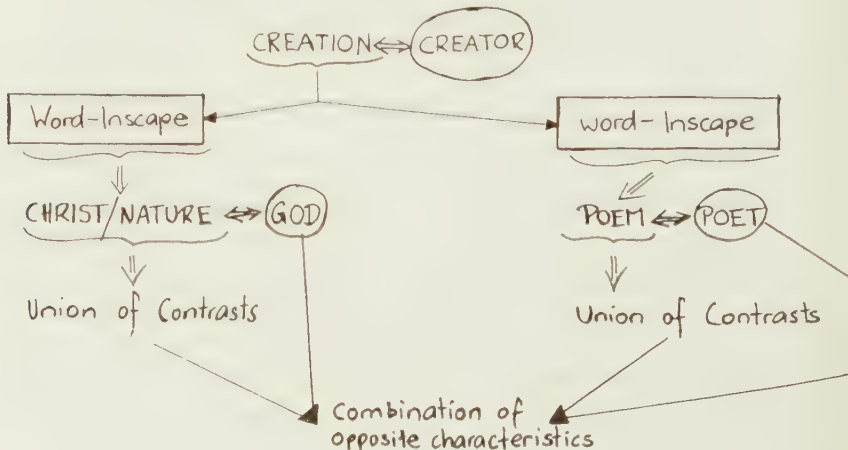
There are two acknowledgments, that our Lord was the Christ and that he was son of God. The Christ is the chosen and anointed man, the Son of God is God (Sermons, 254).

Moreover, while the poet's selving process is striving to call the text into existence, it is, by analogy, "as if the blissful agony or stress of selving in God had forced out drops of sweat of blood, which drops were the world" (Sermons, 197). Since these two products of selving, the Word and the word, were both analyzed with respect to a union of contrasts, the respective twofold identification of creation and creator suggests that God and the poet not only provoke this union of contrasts but represent a true combination of

opposite characteristics themselves.⁴³ This conclusion holds true for God in particular whose "double-natured name" (The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanza 34, Poems, 62) our religious and literary heritage have celebrated for centuries. "Ah my deare angrie Lord", George Herbert laments, "Since thou dost love, yet strike; / Cast down, yet help afford;" ("Bitter Sweet", Herbert, 171); and Milton declared that "light and shade spring both from that high mount of God" (Paradise Lost, V/643-4, Milton, 167).

The essential beauty of both nature and God is 'dappled'; God is simply the highest actualization and personification of piedness and universally reconciles the 'paradox of "inscape"' in nature: "He [God] brings together things thought opposite and incompatible, strict justice and mere mercy, free grace and binding duty" (Sermons, 57). By its deep commitment to this mystery of the double-bound na-

⁴³ Diagram 2: System of interactions and relations in the context of creation and creator



ture of God Whose lightning is affection and Whose bitterness is sweet, Hopkins' activity of wording, his prayer, succeeds in overcoming the 'piedness' of his own inner conflict. The tension between the desire to be an artist and the desire to be a saint, "the war within" ("St. Alphonsus Rodriguez", Poems, 106), is kept down by his poetic achievement. It can even be argued that the realization of the Incarnation of Christ by means of the fusion of oppositions stimulates his verse with the spiritual counterbalance necessary to the growth of the text.⁴⁴ Since he could not be a literal martyr in order to imitate Christ like Southwell,⁴⁵ Hopkins integrated the "counterpoise" into his own poetry, which raises him to the level of fulfilled incarnation "the greatness of which no saint can have ever hoped to realise" (Further Letters, 19).

The goal of any man who wants to imitate Christ and thus reach an ideal state of self-fulfillment is the "beauty of character" which is superior to outward physical beauty: "Far higher than beauty of the body, higher than genius and wisdom the beauty of the mind, comes the beauty of his [Christ's] character, his character as man" (Sermons, 37). Mortal beauty is crowned by transcendent beauty when man's elective will freely chooses "God's better beauty" ("To what serves Mortal

⁴⁴ Cf. Hopkins' letter to Dixon of December 1, 1881: "But there have been very few Jesuit poets and, where they have been, I believe it would be found on examination that there was something exceptional in their circumstances or, so to say, counterbalancing in their career" (Correspondence with Dixon, 93). (Hopkins meant something counterbalancing individual fame).

⁴⁵ "He Southwell wrote amidst a terrible persecution and died a martyr, with circumstances of horrible barbarity: this is the counterpoise in his career" (Correspondence with Dixon, 93).

Beauty", Poems, 98) in order to become an alter Christus:

That is Christ playing at me and me playing at
Christ, only that it is no play but truth. That
is Christ being me and me being Christ (Sermons,
154).

For the poet who tries to accomplish the Imitatio Christi
by means of the text the aim of the "beauty of character"
remains the same but gets a particular direction which makes
the task more toilsome: Hopkins mentions a kind of interme-
diate "beauty of mind" standing for artistic genius: "Then
comes the beauty of the mind, such as genius, and this is
greater than the beauty of the body and not to call danger-
ous" (Letters to Bridges, 95); "So may the mind be distin-
guished for its beauty above other minds and that is genius"
(Sermons, 36).⁴⁶

It was artistic genius that made Hopkins compare Walt Whit-
man's poetry with his own: "I always knew in my heart Walt
Whitman's mind to be more like my own than any other man's
living" (Letters to Bridges, 155). This congeniality becomes
less difficult to grasp when we read Whitman's preface in
Leaves of Grass:

The rhyme and uniformity of perfect poems show the
free growth of metrical laws and bud from them as
unerringly and loosely as lilacs or roses on a bush,
and take shapes as compact as the shapes of chest-

⁴⁶ In his discussions on the different poetic styles Hopkins
consistently calls "Parnassian" what he was to identify
with the beauty of the mind: "Parnassian then is that lan-
guage which genius speaks as fitted to its exaltation, and
place among other genius, but does not sing ... in its flights"
(Further Letters, 216). This kind of style contrasts with
"poetry proper, the language of inspiration" (ibid.) which
can be equated with the "beauty of character".

nuts and oranges and melons and pears, and shed
the perfume impalpable to form.⁴⁷

The analogy of nature and text, which is of paramount importance in Hopkins, obviously plays an eminent role in Whitman too. It is even more astonishing to see that the mutual ambition to reflect or imitate the rhythms and rhymes of nature by means of the rhythms and rhymes of verse in both cases leads to innovative poetry, actually the most innovative poetry of the 19th century as far as metrics and prosody is concerned. What makes Whitman a "scoundrel" and "the fancied resemblance diminish and the imitation disappear" (Letters to Bridges, 155) in Hopkins' eyes is, besides some prosodic considerations, precisely the fact that the American poet does not reach the final level of inspirational "character beauty". It is true that "beauty of mind" is able to create a perfect work of art; yet this is not enough; art has to take a side. Therefore Hopkins' unfinished poem "On a Piece of Music" appears like a comment on Whitman and his (and others') work:

What makes the man and what
The man within that makes:
Ask whom he serves or not
Serves and what side he takes.

For good grows wild and wide,
Has shades, is nowhere none;
But right must seek a side
And choose for chieftain one.

Therefore this masterhood,
This piece of perfect song,
This fault-not found-with good
Is neither right nor wrong,

(Poems, 184-5)

⁴⁷ Walt Whitman, Leaves of Grass, New York, 1959, 10

Hopkins wants artistic genius to be subordinate to something higher: the infinite. Genuine mimesis thereby supersedes Romantic poesis and distracts the poet's attention from his own conceited self towards the insight that all creatures participate in the qualities of God. Only this knowledge translated into the text bestows the distinctive attribute of "character beauty" on the poet.⁴⁸

Even such a "divine genius" as Henry Purcell who "uttered in notes the very make and species of man" ("Henry Purcell", Poems, 80) cannot make meet heaven and earth. The lack of the sacramental quality of his artistic achievement dooms him and his work to the minor level of "beauty of mind", although his expression of self through music is outstanding, and Hopkins accordingly hopes that "Purcell is not damned for being a Protestant, because I love his genius" (Letters to Bridges, 170).

"Henry Purcell"

Have fair fallen, O fair, fair have fallen, so dear
To me, so arch-especial a spirit as heaves in Henry Purcell,
An age is now since passed, since parted; with the reversal
Of the outward sentence low lays him, listed to a heresy, here.

Not mood in him nor meaning, proud fire or sacred fear,
Or love or pity or all that sweet notes not his might nurse:
It is the forged feature finds me; it is the rehearsal
Of own, of abrupt self there so thrusts on, so throngs the ear.

Let him oh! with his air of angels then lift me, lay me! only I'll
Have an eye to the sakes of him, quaint moonmarks, to his pelted
plumage under

Wings: so some great stormfowl, whenever he has walked his while
The thunder-purple seabeach plumed purple-of-thunder,
If a wuthering of his palmy snow-pinions scatter a colossal smile
Off him, but meaning motion fans fresh our wits with wonder.

(Poems, 80)

48 Again Heraclitus summarizes the impact of the text's moral quality in one sentence: "Eyes and ears are poor witnesses for men if their souls do not understand the language" ("Fragment 12", op. cit., 35).

"I'll / Have an eye to the sakes of him" clearly points at a restriction Hopkins has to inflict on himself when considering Purcell: the composer's soul remains out of reach, the outside is all that counts: "'Sake' is a word I find it convenient to use: [...] I mean by it the being a thing has outside itself, as a voice by its echo, a face by its reflection, a body by its shadow, a man by his name, fame, or memory" (Letters to Bridges, 83). The image of the bird which, only "meaning motion", stays on the ground is equally suggestive. Although it spreads its wings displaying its beautiful plumage, it cannot take over the function of the soaring windhover, i.e. unite heaven and earth. Thus the sonnet on Henry Purcell eventually discloses what Hopkins regards as the most tragic plight of artistic existence: it is a pity that an artist like Purcell who possesses the capacity to show forth the "sakes" of man cannot appropriately apply it in God's praise.

Imitation and Originality:

The Actualization of the Past in Poetic Language

I have briefly made mention of the self-reflective quality of Hopkins' verse, such as the Deutschland's constant reference to writing and reading. This allegorization of poetry's own discourse in addition to Hopkins' frequent theoretical remarks on poetics clearly show that the actual nature of language was a matter of fundamental importance to him. It will be the subject of this section to demonstrate how Hopkins whose poetic existence is torn between the con-

flicting poles of imitation⁴⁹ and originality, manages to get over this opposition by various linguistic and prosodic devices. This supplementary force of the text to bring opposites to terms repeats poetry's noted external quality to restore harmony by means of uniting heaven and earth in the Imitatio Christi.

In the previous section rhyme has been emphasized to be one device within the formal structure of poetry to reconcile oppositions. Yet there are other formal features of repetition with variation, of "oftening, over-and-overing, aftering of the inscape" ("Poetry and Verse", Journals, 289), that succeed in uniting contrasts inside the poem, although their relation to the reality outside the poem is less evident than in rhyme. Their common denominator is the fusion of imitation and originality. Rhythm and meter, for instance, are originally traced back to an association of regularity and irregularity.⁵⁰ Consequently, they represent, just like rhyme, a union of contrast which contains an additional parallel to the harmony in nature in the form of the meeting of old and new, a veritable actualization of the past. The past provides the poet with the subject "inscapes" (joy and happiness in Eden) but also with the linguistic "inscapes" (prosody, etc.) to be realized anew in actual poetry. The past thus plays an important part in defining the present.

⁴⁹ I am speaking here of literary mimesis such as of other poets, eras, etc., not of Hopkins' analogy of "inscapes" in nature and in poetry; see also footnote 61 in this chapter.

⁵⁰ Cf. "On the Origin of Beauty", Journals, 100-1

We went up to the castle but not in: standing before the gateway I had an instress which only the true old work gives from the strong and noble inscape of the pointed arch (Journals, 263).⁵¹

"I had long had haunting my ear the echo of a new rhythm, which now I realized on paper" Hopkins informed his new correspondent Canon Richard Watson Dixon. Of course he was referring to 'sprung rhythm' employed for the first time in The Wreck of the Deutschland, for Hopkins continues: "To speak shortly, it consists in scanning by accents or stresses alone, without any account of the number of syllables, so that a foot may be one strong syllable or it may be any light and one strong" (Correspondence with Dixon, 14). Yet, while emphasizing the originality of his sprung rhythm, Hopkins does not claim to have invented sprung rhythms in general:

I do not say that the idea is altogether new; there are hints of it in music, in nursery rhymes and popular jingles, in the poets themselves, and, since then, I have seen it talked about as a thing possible in critics (Correspondence with Dixon, 14).⁵²

Hopkins' definition and explanation of sprung rhythm does not correspond at all to the idea of a fixed, let alone lo-

⁵¹ The actualization of the past has been previously encountered as a constituent of Hopkins' sacramental vision that realizes the long gone pleasures of a paradisaical existence, the "azure of the past" (Further Letters, 128), within the actual permanence of nature and brings "Our King back, Oh, upon English souls!" (The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanza 35. Poems, 63).

⁵² In his "Author's Preface" Hopkins underscores this double aspect of sprung rhythm by regarding it as the restoration of a glorious past: "Though Greek and Latin lyric verse, which is well known, and the old English verse seen in Pierce Ploughman are in sprung rhythm, it has in fact ceased to be used since the Elizabethan age" (Poems, 49). Cf. also Letters to Bridges, 45.

gical, pattern as in regular meter. In fact, Hopkins' original, sometimes odd and queer scanning that places accents on metrically unstressed syllables runs counter to the expected, well-known, and unmistakable standard pattern of the verse line and creates the Miltonic effect of what Hopkins calls "counterpoint":

By a reversed foot I mean the putting the stress where, to judge by the rest of the measure, the slack should be and the slack where the stress [...] If however the reversal is repeated in two feet running, especially so as to include the sensitive second foot, it must be due either to great want of ear or else is a calculated effect, the superinducing or mounting of a new rhythm upon the old; and since the new or mounted rhythm is actually heard and at the same time the mind naturally supplies the natural or standard foregoing rhythm, for we do not forget what the rhythm is that by rights we should be hearing, two rhythms are in some manner running at once and we have something answerable to counterpoint in music, which is two or more strains of tune going on together, and this is Counterpoint Rhythm ("Author's Preface", Poems, 46).

The more 'contrapuntal' divergence there is between the metrical norm and the rhythmic actuality of a verse line, or, in other words, the more freedom of metrical pattern was granted Hopkins by the exploitation of sprung and counterpointed rhythms, the stronger and more efficient is the integrating, unifying, "organic" force of a poetry that embodies, embraces, and unites these opposites of imitation (metrical norm) and originality (rhythmic actuality):

It should be understood that these various means of breaking the sameness of rhythm and especially caesura do not break the unity of verse but the contrary; they make it organic and what is organic is one ("Rhythm and the Other Structural Parts of Rhetoric--Verse", Journals, 283).

The more Hopkins stretches the rigid conventions of meter to the limits by using interpretative sense-stresses in sprung

rhythm and reversed feet in counterpointed rhythm, the more the text obtains that ecstatic and exultant quality of style which unmistakably stands for the semantic aspect of "inscape"; in short, the metrical freedom of Hopkins' rhythms goes hand in hand with the incarnational thought of his poetry:

But emotional intonation, especially when not closely bound to the particular words will sometimes light up notes on unemphatic syllables and not follow the verbal stresses and pitches ("Rhythm and the Other Structural Parts of Rhetoric--Verse", Journals, 270).

The poetry which attempts to imitate Christ Incarnate must therefore be based on a rhythm that not only represents the above-mentioned actualization of the past in the form of a fusion of new utterance with traditional concept; 'incarnational' rhythm is also an instance of both change and stability, difference and sameness; thus it is bound to be at the same time original and standard, i.e. experimental without evading the underlying norm (of meter): sprung and counterpointed rhythms unite originality and imitation on the plans of history and (stress)-structure, both time and space.

The practice of sprung and counterpointed rhythms including the metrical freedom of an occasional mingling of the two systems⁵³ makes a loud reading of the poem absolutely necessary:

Poetry was originally meant for either singing or reciting; a record was kept of it; the record could

53. "Counterpoint is excluded by sprung rhythm. But in some of my sonnets I have mingled the two systems" (Letters to Bridges, 45).

be, was, read, and that in time by one reader, alone, to himself, with the eyes only. This reacted on the art: what was to be performed under these conditions, for these conditions ought to be and was composed and calculated. Sound-effects were intended, wonderful combinations even; but they bear the marks of having been meant for the whispered, not even whispered merely mental performance of the closet, the study, and so on. [...] This is not the true nature of poetry, the darling child of speech, of lips and spoken utterance: it must be spoken; till it is spoken it is not performed, it does not perform, it is not itself. Sprung rhythm gives back poetry its true soul and self.⁵⁴

This stress on the performative character of his 'new' prosodic techniques represents Hopkins' continuing endeavor to bring up ancient, oral cultures, such as medieval usage that joined literary and religious experience, or classic antiquity that perfectly identified poetry and music: "Of this long sonnet ["Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves"] above all remember what applies to all my verse, that it is, as living art should be, made for performance This sonnet shd. be almost sung: it is most carefully timed in tempo rubato (Letters to Bridges, 246).

It was Hopkins' declared aim to align his poetic rhythms with the measure and melody of oral prose, i.e. speech which induces a genuine dialogue between poet and reader just as the Spiritual Exercises are to envisage the colloquy between God and the exercitant.

Why do I employ sprung rhythm at all? Because it is the nearest to the rhythm of prose, that is the native and natural rhythm of speech, the least forced, the most rhetorical and emphatic of all possible

⁵⁴ Gerard Manley Hopkins, Selected Prose, ed. By Gerald Roberts. London, 1980, 1377). Cf. also Letters to Bridges, 263: "the rhythm of this sonnet ... is altogether for recital not for perusal."

rhythms, combining, as it seems to me opposite and, one wd. have thought, incompatible excellences, markedness of rhythm--that is rhythm's self--and naturalness, of expression (Letters to Bridges, 46).

The turn towards the past and its restoration in the present belong to a wide-spread Victorian attitude that found in the unbroken times of yore a soothing harmony and a unison that were to be resurrected. Hopkins echoes these feelings in his own special way, namely through the expression of a transcendent past in his actual prosody, syntax, and morphology: poetic song is given the features of his skylark's "rash-fresh rewinded new-skeined score" ("The Sea and the Skylark", Poems, 68), because, as Hopkins explicitly but reluctantly elucidated this passage in a letter to Bridges, the bird's song typifies renewal and resumption: once again, bird and poet become one in their mutual efforts at union.

'Rash-fresh score' (it is dreadful to explain these things in cold blood) means a headlong and exciting new snatch of singing, resumption by the lark of his song, which by turns he gives over and takes up again all day long, and this goes on, the sonnet says, through all time, without ever losing its first freshness, being a thing both new and old (Letters to Bridges, 164, emphasis mine).

I have already dealt with the meeting of old and new in sprung rhythm. What counts for Hopkins' rhythms also holds true for his poems' rather eccentric word order and his willfully odd omissions: hyperbaton, the intentional arrangement of words in an arbitrary, non-logical, or associative pattern within the sentence, occurs more than frequently in Hopkins' St. Beuno verse; sprung rhythm, in other words, is appropriately matched with a kind of 'sprung syntax'. On account of this technique's Greek and Latin models, hyperbaton is another trope for the

coming together of tradition and experiment; imitation of ancient concepts leads to fresh originality.⁵⁵

Since unusual word order, in Hopkins' case, always falls back on the question how much the speaker is emotionally involved in what he has to say, it discloses a mind in the state of excitement and ecstasy, producing a similar state in the reader. Consequently, syntactical freedom (just like metrical licence) mirrors the sacramental value of Hopkins' poetic imagery and therefore fits neatly into the underlying thought system; to put it differently, the more important the incarnational meaning of the union of transcendence and transitoriness becomes in Hopkins' poetry, the more ardently the poet tries to express it in ever more daring rhythms and syntax: the poet's self-incarnation by means of an extremely deep penetration into poetic form (rhyme proper, meter, syntax) imitates the Incarnation of Christ. Hopkins' form, imagery and thought belong firmly together on the grounds of their capacity to reconcile contrasts and to reveal and cause ecstasy.

Hopkins follows the track of the unification of oppositions even to the still lower linguistic level of simple lexical units. His interest in word formation and etymology and their working up in poetry sets forth his desire to suggest new

⁵⁵ This fundamental idea holds good for Hopkins' repeated ellipsis of the relative pronoun; for even this not very common practice had a precedent in the 16th century and is still found in Scottish or Northern dialects. Eminent occurrences are "Save my hero, O Hero [who] savest" ("The Loss of the Eurydice", Poems, 76), "with the reversal / Of the outward sentence [which] low lays him" ("Henry Purcell", *ibid.*, 80), and "Here! creep, / Wretch, under a comfort [that] serves in a whirlwind" ("No worst, there is none", *ibid.*, 100).

meanings, values, and associations for old, existing words, i.e. to create lexical "inscapes" full of new life and strength, in short, self; thus it must be argued again that, in Hopkins, originality has to recur to imitation in order to bring forth the text or the word. Hence the comparative scarcity of genuine word inventions pointed out by many Hopkins scholars.

Hopkins' characteristic technique of compounding is just another instance of realizing the past within the present: compounds, so typical of stressed languages such as Old English, would give back to the English language the power it had once possessed. Moreover, a compound alone depicts a union, a combination of two single, given, often differing entities (unlikeness) with a certain semantical affinity (likeness) within a new homogenous coinage.⁵⁶ This definition leads to the union of contrasts in metaphorical language or what I called rhyme in nature:⁵⁷ figurative language also expresses a correspondence between things usually thought of as quite unlike; metaphors can therefore be compounds and vice versa. As is generally known, metaphors express the 'identity-in-difference' by means of the tertium comparationis; since the two things compared are semantically much further apart than in a simple grammatical compound, metaphorical language is an extension of Hopkins' 'compounding' concept. Proper rhymes (alliterations, etc.), rhymes in nature (compounds, metaphors, etc.), and supernatural rhymes (thought)

⁵⁶ E.g. noun and verb, such as in "heaven-fallen" ("Epithalamion", Poems, 199).

⁵⁷ Cf. first section of this chapter.

are all figures of "inscape" having the same structure of unity-in-variety.

Obviously the attractiveness and effectiveness of all the formal devices that bring together poetic audacity (newness) and discretion (oldness) lie in the seeming eminence of the momentum of originality which forms, in its wholeness, a new language for poetry: current language heightened.

For it seems to me that the poetical language of an age shd. be the current language heightened, to any degree heightened and unlike itself, but not (I mean normally: passing freaks and graces are another thing) an obsolete one (Letters to Bridges, 89).

The anxiety to be original also manifests itself in the exterior shape of the single verse line or of the whole poem. Hopkins experiments with shortened, so-called "curtal" sonnets ("Pied Beauty"), introduces extrametrical syllables which he calls "outrides" or "hangers", inserts additional half or "burden" lines ("Harry Ploughman"), lengthens the sonnet by a "coda" ("That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire"), or invents new and very complicated stanza forms (The Wreck of the Deutschland). He was perfectly aware of the fact that this propensity for being different, this inner drive to dig new poetic "inscapes" (form and meaning) out of old material could sometimes be so drastic as to cause obscurity:

No doubt my poetry errs on the side of oddness. I hope in time to have a more balanced and Miltonic style. But as air, melody is what strikes me most of all in music and design in painting, so design, pattern or what I am in the habit of calling 'inscape' is what I above all aim at in poetry. Now it is the virtue of design, pattern, or inscape to be distinctive and it is the vice of distinctiveness to become queer. This vice I cannot have escaped (Letters to Bridges, 66).

Hopkins kept on defending ambiguity, the "backbone of most good poetry", as William Empson called it.⁵⁸ For instance he liked the clash of two meanings in one word: "Cover is a good word, and row, both verb and noun" (Journals, 50). Homophones such as the "Windhover's" "rèin" (reign) (Poems, 69) or the "kingfisher's" "ring" (ibid., 90) unite the contrast of rhyme's similarity of sound and dissimilarity of meaning. Hopkins added however that he uses obscurity only when of a higher excellence (Letters to Bridges, 54). Homophones represent instances of such higher excellence; another, more characteristic example is the momentary obscurity provoked by enjambment. Hopkins realizes this actually very Miltonic effect rather easily because sprung rhythm propagates "rove over" lines,

that is for the scanning of each line immediately to take up that of the one before, so that if the first has one or more syllables at its end the other must have so many the less at its beginning; and in fact the scanning runs on without break from the beginning, say, of a stanza to the end ("Author's Preface", Poems, 48).

Hopkins' enjambment hardly involves an extension of meaning or even a contre-rejet in the second line as is often the case with Milton; but the time we need to switch from one line to the next one is sufficient to create an instant of tension which can amount to obscurity, above all if it occurs as consistently as in Hopkins.

All these formal and prosodic devices of originality prevent an immediate "effortless" understanding, but it is certainly not Hopkins' intention to bar meaning from coming out at all.

⁵⁸ William Empson, op. cit. : 95

Things should be at once intelligible; but everything need not and cannot be. Plainly if it is possible to express a sub[t]le and recondite thought on a subtle and recondite subject in a subtle and recondite way and with great felicity and perfection, in the end, something must be sacrificed, with so trying a task, in the process, and this may be the being at once, nay perhaps even the being without explanation at all, intelligible (Letters to Bridges, 265-6).⁵⁹

Hopkins drives at an artistic creation which requires a particular, original achievement of the poetic self. The resulting poem-"inscape", by here and there touching upon obscurity, will be difficult but not impossible to understand and thus matches man's difficult but not impossible task to apprehend Christ's mystery, the 'paradox of "inscape"', the meaning of which does not "explode" but after some reflection: "It is a happy thing", Hopkins analogously wrote at the age of nineteen, "there is no royal road to poetry" (Journals, 23); and twenty-four years later, towards the end of his life, he repeats this opinion with ardor:

The effect of studying masterpieces is to make me admire and do otherwise. So it must be on every original artist to some degree, on me to a marked degree (Letters to Bridges, 291).

Hopkins decidedly wants to avoid archaisms in language on the grounds of their "unreality": "I hold that by archaism a thing is sicklied o'er as by blight" (Letters to Bridges, 218). The same goes for literary echoes: "The echoes are a disease of education, literature is full of them, but they remain a disease, an evil" (Letters to Bridges, 206). This statement makes it all the more striking that echoes of other

⁵⁹ see also p.116 in this chapter.

poets and literary cultures, i.e. devices of almost pure imitation, occur in Hopkins (cf. references to Milton, Tennyson, Herbert on the one hand, to Classicism, Medievalism, and Romanticism on the other). Apparently even the most original experiments are due to the clues of the past; and once again it comes into bright focus that Hopkins' originality is not conceivable without imitation:

Every true poet, I thought, must be original and originality a condition of poetic genius; so that each poet is like a species in nature ... and can never recur. That nothing shd. be old or borrowed however cannot be (Further Letters, 370).⁶⁰

Only the perfect equipoise of imitation and originality is liable to bring forth the faultless literary work that enables the poet to aspire to the highest pitch of self-fulfilment, the Imitatio Christi.⁶¹ Therefore the poem's union of imitation and originality interacts with Christ's (and the poem's mimetic) capacity to make meet heaven and earth; the fact that literary echoes lie at the root of experimental verse, that standard meter lurks behind sprung rhythm and

⁶⁰ Hopkins is not alone with this opinion: T.S. Eliot asserts in the introduction to the Selected Poems of Ezra Pound (London, 1926, x-xi): "The poem which is absolutely original is absolutely bad; it is in the bad sense, 'subjective' with no relation to the world to which it appeals. [...] True originality is merely development; and if it is right development it may appear in the end so inevitable that we almost come to the point of view of denying all 'original' virtue to the poet. He simply did the next thing."

⁶¹ It has to be remembered that there is a distinction between imitation as poetry's transcription of nature-"inscapes" and imitatio as the poet's transcription of existing ideas. The first consists of rhyme or repetition with variation and stands for the whole of poetic creation, the second is echo or pure repetition and constitutes a part of this poetic creation.

that only repetition inaugurates the various rhyme-"inscapes", answers to an issue noted in the course of the previous chapter, namely that Christ's divinity depends upon his life on earth among mankind.⁶²

Yet it will be seen that Hopkins' later works, that is to say his 'evening verse' and his 'night poetry' will abandon the ideal equilibrium of earthly imitation and heavenly originality which had given rise to the creation of the characteristic St. Beuno poetry. His creative power will proceed to produce more conventional forms and rhythms. This development represents a switch over to the monotonous repetitions and echoes of imitation, which is the beginning not only of the end of Hopkins' literary activity but also of the close of his personal existence.

⁶² Cf. chapter 4, pp. 74-5

6 . MAN ' S I N B O R N A N T I T H E S I S :

O n t h e E v e o f U n s e l v i n g

If the poet's selving-process culminates in becoming like Christ, his increasing knowledge of Christ must make him commensurately aware of his own faults and failings. The "self-taste which nothing in the world can match" includes shame and guilt too (Sermons, 125): the knowledge of the past embodies the apprehension of original sin which weighs heavily on man's shoulders and jeopardizes the perfect equilibrium of human and divine as witnessed in natural beauty and in Christ's Incarnation. With the Fall of Adam, Eve, and the first kingdom of God, Hopkins explained to his congregation,

all fell, all is gone: it was divided against itself, the subject against the sovereign, man against God, and every kingdom, said the Son of God, even God's kingdom divided against itself must come to desolation (Sermons, 58).

Even behind the St. Beuno poems' joyous celebration of nature, in which the poet views the world as already sharing the day of fulfillment, there lurks, first hidden, then more and more eminent, man's blindness, waywardness, and refusal to realize the kind of nature he lives in. His missing cooperation does not correspond to the state of eternal bliss manifested in nature's innocent being and perfect emulation of God's plan. Bound on his own crooked ways and tied to his own corrupt intentions, man, the actual heir of earth, instead of perceiving and uttering the beauty of nature as "Earth's eye" and

"tongue", and instead of being conversely struck in his "heart" by the brilliancy of this grace, wastefully strips bare the rich world and does not care for an after-world, which brings to earth's face furrows of sorrow:

"Ribblesdale"

Earth, sweet Earth, sweet landscape, with leaves throng
And louched low grass, heaven that dost appeal
To, with no tongue to plead, no heart to feel;
That canst but only be, but dost that long--

Thou canst but be, but that thou well dost; strong
Thy plea with him who dealt, nay does now deal,
Thy lovely dale down thus and thus bids reel
The river, and o'er gives all to rack or wrong.

And what is Earth's eye, tongue, or heart else, where
Else, but in dear and dogged man?--Ah, the heir
To his own selfbent so bound, so tied to his turn,

To thriftless reave both our rich round world bare
And none reck of world after, this bids wear
Earth brows of such care, care and dear concern.

(Poems, 90-1)

Original sin and its subsequent association with death appears as antithesis to the harmony in nature accomplished by the poet's sacramental vision.¹ The consciousness of man's own

¹ As is written in the Book, death entered the world through Adam's and Eve's selfish act of disobedience which stays with man throughout his whole course of life and is always at the forefront of his mind:

That Death be not one stroke, as I suppos'd,
Bereaving sense, but endless misery
From this day onward, which I feel begun
Both in me, and without me, and so last
To perpetuity;

Paradise Lost X/809-13 (Milton, 289)

Hopkins takes up the idea of perpetual death-in-life in "The Shepherd's Brow" among other poems:

But man--we, scaffold of score brittle bones;
Who breathe, from groundlong babyhood to hoary
Age gasp; whose breath is our memento mori--
What bass is our viol for tragic tones?

(Poems, 107)

mortality slowly but surely sets an irreconcilable contrast to nature's permanence.

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

"God's Grandeur" (Poems, 66)

Yet this poem still leaves a glimmer of hope: a revealing color contrast raises the expectation; the sorrowful limitation of the human condition is abolished by God's ever-lasting and ever-healing spirit:

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs--
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

(ibid.)

The gradual separation of Hopkins' picture of man's sinful state from his picture of nature's graceful excellence was however bound to grow to a veritable dichotomy that could not be bridged anymore--in contrast to poems such as "The Windhover", "Hurrahing in Harvest", or "In the Valley of the Elwy" in whose concluding tercet the poet, just as in "God's Grandeur", prays for a reunion of man and nature after having pointed out their antagonism:

Lovely the woods, waters, meadows, combes, vales,
All the air things wear that build this world of Wales;
Only the inmate does not correspond:
God, lover of souls, swaying considerate scales,
Complete thy creature dear O where it fails,
Being mighty a master, being a father and fond.

(Poems, 68)

Hopkins realized in the course of his active priesthood that disregard for the world of nature goes hand in hand with disregard for the spiritual world; sin also consists of a lack of response towards the "inscapes" of nature; man's loss of the poet's sacramental vision, which is due to his not employing created beauty to raise him to Beauty, means oblivion of his duty to God: lack of sight is lack of faith.

How these two [sea and skylark] shame this shallow and frail town!
How ring right out our sordid turbid time,
Being pure! We, life's pride and cared-for crown,

Have lost that cheer and charm of earth's past prime:
Our make and making break, are breaking, down
To man's last dust, drain fast towards man's first slime.

"The Sea and the Skylark" (Poems, 68)

Above all Hopkins' feeling of revolt upon 19th century industrial civilisation gave instant response to his particular sensitivity towards moral ugliness and confinement:

In sordidness of care and crime
The city tires to death,
And faces fit for leisure gaze
And daylight and sweet air,
Missing prosperity and praise,
Are never known for fair.

"Summa" (Poems, 173)

It is this "degradation even of our race, of the hollowness of this century's civilisation" (Correspondence with Dixon, 97) that made life a burden to Hopkins. He begins to envisage man as mere destroyer of environment and rejector of God, who is not capable of substantiating things as they were 'before'. The actualization of the past, this fulfilled longing for prime being, which constituted the St. Beuno poetry to a great extent, becomes an illusion. In an early poem Hopkins had anticipatorily pondered: "The lawless honey eaten of old /

Has lost its savour and is roll'd / Into the bitterness of sin" ("Glimmer'd along the square-cut steep", Poems, 130).

"Duns Scotus's Oxford" proclaims this difference of the moment of utterance from the time preceding the actual saying by bewailing the palpable clash of past and present: whereas the first quatrain is a recollection of the irrevocably lost beauties of the past written in the past, the second stanza provides a stocktaking of the actual state of corruption and rottenness written in the present tense. Only the spiritual companionship of the beloved Scotus can momentarily ease Hopkins' pain which is due to the distressing irretrievability of the past.

"Duns Scotus's Oxford"

Towery city and branchy between towers;
Cuckoo-echoing, bell-swarmed, lark-charmed, rook-racked,
 river rounded;
The dapple-eared lily below thee; that country and town did
Once encounter in, here coped and poised powers;

Thou hast a base and brickish skirt there, sours
That neighbour-nature thy grey beauty is grounded
Best in; graceless growth, thou hast confounded
Rural rural keeping--folk, flocks, and flowers.

Yet ah! this air I gather and I release
He lived on; these weeds and waters, these walls are what
He haunted who of all men most sways my spirits to peace;
Of realty the rarest-veined unraveller; a not
Rivalled insight, be rival Italy or Greece;
Who fired France for Mary without spot.

(Poems, 79)

Since the human is not admitted into vision any longer, nature becomes a mere setting for man's existence, that is to say, man's corruption is paralleled by the disintegration of nature in the long run: "What worm was here, we cry, / To have havoc-pocked so, see, the hung-heavenward boughs? / Enough: corruption was the world's first woe" ("On the Portrait of Two Beautiful Young People", Poems, 196). It is as

if the scape of sin, "that act of its own, which blotted out God and so put blackness in the place of light" (Sermons, 138) contaminates the "inscapes" of the world; thus expression is given to the negative aspect of nature whereas its life-giving force is entirely neglected:² the great synthesis, this union of heaven and earth that seemed so stable, steadfast, not to say perennial, gets a terrible and unexpected shock when the proud "Eurydice" receives the deadly blow of a gale out of the blue:

And you were a liar, O blue March day.
Bright sun lanced fire in the heavenly bay;
But what black Boreas wrecked her? he
Came equipped, deadly-electric,
A beetling baldbright cloud thorough England
Riding: there did storms not mingle? and
Hailropes hustle and grind their
Heavengravel? wolfsnow, worlds of it, wind there?
"The Loss of the Eurydice" (Poems, 72-3)

The colour blue and the magic of an electric charge which earlier proved to be tropes of the union of contrasts change into antagonistic images of disconnection: blue becomes untrue, electricity causes death.

Hopkins begins to recognize the reflections of original sin in the natural world. Just like man who chose to disobey God by not giving him glory and thus did not reach the end of his being, the objects in nature cannot consciously praise God:

The sun and the stars shining glorify God. They
stand where he placed them, they move where he bid

² "In Nature is something that makes, builds up, and breeds, as vegetation, life in fact; and over against this, also in Nature, something that unmakes or pulls to pieces, what in another place is called Death and Strife" (Correspondence with Dixon, 53).

them. 'The heavens declare the glory of God'. They glorify God, but they do not know it. The birds sing to him, the thunder speaks of his terror, the lion is like his strength, the sea is like his greatness, the honey like his sweetness; they are something like him, they make him known, they tell of him, they give him glory, but they do not know they do, they do not know him, they never can, they are brute things that only think of food or think of nothing. This then is poor praise, faint reverence, slight service, dull glory (Sermons, 239

Nature's perfect unification of transcendence and transitoriness is not effective once the earthly power of death and disintegration has commenced to overshadow nature's heavenly permanence.

The sun shines too long and withers the harvest, the rain is too heavy and rots it or in floods spreading washes it away; the air and water carry in their currents the poison of disease; there are poison plants, venomous snakes and scorpions; the beasts our subjects rebel, not only the blood-thirsty tiger that slaughters yearly its thousands, but even the bull will gore and the stallion bite or strike; at night the moon sometimes has no light to give, at others the clouds darken her; [...] everything is full of fault, flaw, imperfection, shortcoming (Sermons, 90).

The corruption of "My people and born own nation, / Fast foundering own generation" ("The Loss of the Eurydice", Poems, 75) causes the analogous collapse of "inscapes" in nature and, as a consequence, relates the Fall to the fall: the overpowering consciousness of man's evanescence, the knowledge that he was born for sickness, devastation, and disease calls for an appropriate background; the end of the day or the decline of the seasonal year are the proper tropes of closure: the falling of leaves (in the fall) symbolizes the falling of selves (through the Fall).

"Spring and Fall"
to a young child

Margaret, are you grieving
Over Goldengrove unleaving?
Leaves, like the things of man, you
With your fresh thoughts care for, can you?
Ah! as the heart grows older
It will come to such sights colder
By and by, nor spare a sigh
Though worlds of wanwood leafmeal lie;
And yet you will weep and know why.
Now no matter, child, the name:
Sorrow's springs are the same.
Nor mouth had, no nor mind, expressed
What heart heard of, ghost guessed:
It is the blight man was born for,
It is Margaret you mourn for.

(Poems, 88-9)

Actually Hopkins had a very distinctive prepossession towards the unselving process in nature, especially the felling of trees, which he associated with the destruction of human selves from the beginning: "The ashtree growing in the corner of the garden was felled. It was lopped first: I heard the sound and looking out and seeing it maimed there came at that moment a great pang and I wished to die and not to see the inscapes of the world destroyed any more" (Journals, 230).³ Conversely, decay in the psychic disposition is paralleled by disintegration in the exterior world: "In fact being unwell I was quite downcast: nature in all her parcels and faculties gaped and fell apart, fatiscebat, like a clod cleaving and holding only by strings of root" (Journals, 236). Hopkins' feelings towards the extinction of "inscapes" goes back to a readiness to relate the external landscape to his own state of mind. The untimely destruction of the beautiful

³ Cf. similar entries in Journals, 189, 240, Further Letters, 83, and also compare Hopkins' personification of nature in chapter 4, p. 57, footnote 13.

"Binsey Poplars", by simultaneously making havoc of the visual sense ("a prick will make no eye at all") renders impossible sacramental vision; along with the tree's growth, man's aspiring efforts to become like Christ are unnaturally stopped. The felling of a tree amounts to a failure of communication between man and God because it kills an identity ("a prick will make no [aI] (I) at all"). Since tree-"inscapes" in nature symbolize Christ Incarnate's attainment of a union between heaven and earth, their destruction interferes with the poet's mimetic pull and thwarts the imitation of Christ.

"Binsey Poplars"
felled 1879

My aspens dear, whose airy cages quelled,
Quelled or quenched in leaves the leaping sun,
All felled, felled, are all felled;
 Of a fresh and following folded rank
 Not spared, not one
 That dandled a sandalled
 Shadow that swam or sank
On meadow and river and wind-wandering weed-winding bank.

O if we but knew what we do
 When we delve or hew--
Hack and rack the growing green!
 Since country is so tender
No touch, her being so slender,
That, like this sleek and seeing ball
But a prick will make no eye at all,
Where we, even where we mean
 To mend her we end her,
 When we hew or delve:
After-comers cannot guess the beauty been.
Ten or twelve, only ten or twelve
 Strokes of havoc unselve
 The sweet especial scene,
Rural scene, a rural scene,
Sweet especial rural scene.

(Poems, 78-9)

What distinguishes the felling of trees from the falling of leaves in autumn is precisely what draws the line between violent, premature death and natural passing away. In the first case the poet's sorrow is deeply rooted in an unshak-

able belief that poetry's imitation of Christ-like nature will lead him to personal salvation because "ten or twelve / Strokes of havoc" do not only "unselve the sweet especial scene" of this world, but also give the finishing stroke to man's aspiring exertion of writing: "folded" links the "felled" trees, by way of a Hopkinsian etymology and by its semantical affinity with "leave" to "folio" or written paper;⁴ destruction of nature simultaneously annihilates the text. "Golden-grove's unleaving", by contrast, is a normal unselving process in time: "Nor can you long be, what you now are, called fair" ("The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo", Poems, 91); the ever so precious gold laboriously extracted by the alchemist's synthesis and the correspondent, ever so priceless text brought forth by the poet's vision are both bound to vanish when the time has come. The disappearance of "inscapes" and of sacramental vision is a hint at the poetic text's losing its ability to stand for the Imitatio Christi. While the felling of the "Binsey Poplars" goes hand in hand with an immediate breakdown of the poem's external shape, the gradual dissolution of nature "inscapes" will generally coincide with the complete fading away of linguistic "inscapes". Apprehended evanescence of creation will put an end to poetic originality and finally to creativity itself.

In fact, while Hopkins' look at beauty in nature is turning into a judgement of man's destiny and his poor chances for salvation, which in turn affects Hopkins' outlook at nature, his poetic style is changing to a neo-classical plainness

⁴ I am grateful to Professor John Hollander of Yale University for the suggested connection of "folded" and "folio".

that almost makes forget the quasi-Romantic genesis of his poems in the tender Aeolian spheres of "mid-air": "I enclose a sonnet ["Andromeda"] on which I invite minute criticism. I endeavoured in it at a more Miltonic plainness and severity than I have anywhere else" (Letters to Bridges, 87). This "plainness and severity" is already salient in Hopkins' second shipwreck poem "The Loss of the Eurydice". It is written in sprung rhythm, but, in other respects, seems to comply with Bridges' wishes asking for a more popular and acceptable style: "This poem on the Eurydice is hitherto almost all narrative however" (Letters to Bridges, 49). Swift and short narrative, less discourse, comprehensible word order, easier rhythm, catchy rhyme, in short, unmannered style, give evidence of Hopkins' basic conception to try to appeal to a wider reading audience and thus to emulate the range of Christ's influence. Since Hopkins was never willing to eschew his prosodic idiosyncrasies altogether, the poems written towards the end of his life still remain the achievement of a union of originality and imitation; this concurrence forms and will always form the conditio sine qua non of Hopkins' poetic work, but it will not always result in the Imitatio Christi. The more Hopkins shifts the emphasis towards imitation by having recourse to simpler prosody and easier diction, the less the poetic text represents the Imitatio because it loses its original, incarnational strength.

Elizabeth Schneider makes out a similar development. Beginning with "Andromeda" she discovers four major differences in Hopkins' 'new' style: a sharp reduction in the number of descriptive epithets and complete disappearance of the ad hoc compound ones, a reduction almost to the vanishing point of the parallel,

and especially appositional, constructions, the disappearance of variety in the imagery, and a return to the old, relatively conventional rhythm of iambic pentameter.⁵ Professor Schneider is basically right in three out of these four points. In fact there are fewer epithets, although not necessarily fewer compound ones; there is also an ostensible limitation of metaphorical language and a simplification of the rhythmic pattern. Nevertheless, these devices do not entirely vanish from Hopkins' poetry: compounds, along with metaphorical language and sprung rhythms represent the stylistic features Hopkins cannot do without. On the grounds of their 'cohesive' force to unite imitation and originality, Hopkins' verse would be unthinkable without at least traces of these constituting artifices.

Yet the reduction of compounds, metaphors, and sprung rhythm along with the simultaneous dissolution of the natural world in his poems are unmistakable signs of the fading incarnational power of Hopkins' poetry. This gradual change towards pure imitation additionally implies why professor Schneider must be wrong about the second conspicuous difference she mentions in her book: Hopkins does not drop parallel constructions at all; on the contrary, he goes on using them quite frequently. Actually his verse always stipulates parallelisms of one kind or another. What Hopkins' shifting towards a less elaborate and more imitative style after 1877 entails is not an extinction of parallelisms altogether but a slight modification of the concept: repetitions with variation give way

5. Elizabeth W. Schneider, The Dragon in the Gate, Berkeley, 1968, 178-9

to literal, almost primitive, incantatory echoes.⁶ "Inversnaid", written during a trip to the place, is a good case in point because it recapitulates the whole process: the first three, densely textured, stanzas are a rich, dynamic, St. Beuno-like rendering of a river and its motion: the poet is that much charmed by his vision that he puts the actual dreariness of the world usually overpowering him in these years into the hypothetical mode. But even then, i.e. in the last stanza, the syntax, diction, and rhythm become plain and highly repetitive after the epiphoric echo of "Degged with dew, dappled with dew" has prepared the stylistic grounds in the preceding third stanza.

"Inversnaid"

This darksome burn, horseback brown,
His rollrock highroad roaring down,
In coop and in comb the fleece of his foam
Flutes and low to the lake falls home.

A windpuff-bonnet of fawn-froth
Turns and twindles over the broth
Of a pool so pitchblack, fell-frowning,
It rounds and rounds Despair to drowning.

Degged with dew, dappled with dew
Are the groins of the braes that the brook treads through,
Wiry heathpacks, flitches of fern,
And the beadbonny ash that sits over the burn.

What would the world be, once bereft
Of wet and of wildness? Let them be left,
O let them be left, wildness and wet;
Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet.

(Poems, 89)

Similarly, "Duns Scotus's Oxford" changes its style in the pause between the first and the second quatrain: the sprung

⁶ In an early essay on "The Origin of our Moral Ideas" Hopkins had insisted on unity-in-variety: "In art we strive to realise not only unity, permanence of law, likeness, but also, with it, difference, variety, contrast: it is rhyme we like, not echo and not unison but harmony" (Journals, 83). Such an enthusiasm about repetition with variation has now become obsolete and superseded by 'pure' repetition or echo.

syntax of the opening lines describing the Oxford of ancient times 'relapses' into simple, comprehensible, actually prose-like, sentences climaxing in a seemingly unfounded, pure, repetition: "thou hast confounded / Rural rural keeping" (Poems, 79).

This change from a domination of unity-in-variety to an accumulation of repetitive echo-figures in the poems produced in the years between 1878 and 1889 gives evidence of Hopkins' revision of his own vision.⁷ Echo, in contrast to repetition with variation, is mere sameness; and the poetry that more and more integrates it into its body rapidly evolves straightforward imitation. Echo, by definition, also means the imitation of other literary artefacts; and it is revealing indeed that Hopkins, with "Andromeda", has recourse to the world of mythology which he otherwise condemns as "untrue" and "unworkable":⁸ after having created some kind of incarnational myth himself, Hopkins falls back on the subject matter of classical antiquity. Hopkins' regression to echo-structures is matched by a return to Echo, the mythological nymph. Both linguistic and mythological echoes possess a tendency to dissolve. Just as the unnatural redundancy of linguistic units

⁷ The gamut of figures of 'pure' repetition includes simple combinations: "thou hast confounded / Rural rural keeping" ("Duns Scotus's Oxford", Poems, 79), reduplications: "I am in Ireland now; now I am at a third / Remove ("To seem the stranger", ibid., 101), inversions: "Where she shall yet conceive / Him, morning, noon, and eve; / New Bethlems, and he born / There, evening, noon, and morn--" ("The Blessed Virgin compared to the Air we Breathe", ibid., 95), anaphoras (with synonym echoes): "God to aggrandise, God to glory-fy" ("The Candle Indoors", ibid., 81), or mixed forms such as the beginning of "Henry Purcell" (ibid., 80): "Have fair fallen, O fair, fair have fallen".

⁸ See chapter 4, pp. 57-8

is to be regarded as a state of advanced loss of language, an echo fades away and, in the end, leaves nothing but muteness and silence.

The concluding image of "Inversnaid" provides the 'corridor' of time that had led Hopkins' St. Beuno poetry to realize the past in an eternal present with renewed access to the future.⁹ It seems as if the abundance of echoes and repetitive patterns represent desperate attempts on the poet's side to preserve or extend a state of actual joy: "Let them be left, / O let them be left, wildness and wet; / Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet" (Poems, 89). Otherwise they sadly record the unchangeability of the events: "My aspens dear, ... All felled, felled, are all felled" ("Binsey Poplars", Poems, 78). All these statements reveal a poetic attention which does not exclusively direct its excitement towards--rarely repeated--present revelation such as in "The Woodlark's" "To the nest's nook I balance and buoy / With a sweet joy of a sweet joy, / Sweet, of a sweet, of a sweet joy / of a sweet--a sweet--sweet--joy" (Poems, 178), but tries to get a strong hold on the world's design in the time to come. Accordingly, the outlook on the future is either the prospect of a new, hopeful, and promising dawn of mankind: "And though the last lights off the black West went / Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs--" ("God's Grandeur", Poems, 66); or the poem speaks of a future disconnection, of destruction and of death when "the heart's eye grieves / Discovering you, dark trampers, tyrant years" ("On the Portrait of Two Beau-

⁹ Cf. the Oxford poetry's look into the future in chapter 3 and its comparison with the 'terrible' sonnets in the chapter after this one.

tiful Young people", Poems, 196), and "you will weep and know why" ("Spring and Fall", Poems, 89). One way or another, the very rare oracular endings of some St. Beuno poems that break out of the usual frame of actual, timeless, presence are thus made the main subject-matter of Hopkins' later poetry; for in this verse he begins to show a growing interest into single people's future destiny. As a matter-of-fact, it is for this anxiety about the possibilities of salvation that Hopkins' poems written between St. Beuno and Dublin become alive with human flesh and blood. "The Handsome Heart", "The Bugler's First Communion" or "Felix Randal" are only a few examples.

This almost exclusive concern with the future of nature's design and the fate of man therein therefore parallels Hopkins' 'new' poetic style of predominant imitation. It is the awareness of man's inborn antithesis, of the Fall, sin, and death, which is bound to extricate the poem from the St. Beuno environment of timeless Incarnation and gives it a teleological-temporal dimension of closure in the form of pure repetitions and echoes that foreshadow the poem's own dissolution. Hopkins associates the knowledge of time, that is to say, the knowledge that we live in an evolving universe, with death and the disintegration of self; the "ravages of time" (Further letters, 115) are seen to carry off human life when the cold ticking of a watch supersedes the life-giving beat of our heart:

Mortal my mate, bearing my rock-a-heart
Warm beat with cold beat company, shall I
Earlier or you fail at our force and lie
The ruins of, rifled, once a world of art?
The telling time our task is; time's some part,
Not all, but we were framed to fail and die--
One spell and well that one. There, ah thereby
Is comfort's carol of all or woe's worst smart.

"To his Watch" (Poems, 193)

After his Fall man does not only have to leave the garden of Eden but also moves out of the primitive incarnational shelter of timelessness into the tough reality of cosmic on-goingness mercilessly driving him to his second fall:

I am soft sift
In an hourglass--at the wall
Fast, but mined with a motion, a drift,
And it crowds and it combs to the fall;

The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanza 4 (Poems, 52)

The moment of epiphany, by contrast, which Hopkins witnessed so many times during his trips in the Welsh countryside revealed Christ's unlimited reaching back and forth through time. The poetic prayers that Hopkins uttered through Him were therefore equally, and truly timeless; but they have become a myth themselves and form, to use a malicious term, a kind of 'escapist' literature because they realized what the "Leaden Echo" asks for in vain: to stop time:

How to keep-- is there any any, is there none such, nowhere
known some, bow or brooch or braid or brace, lace,
latch or catch or key to keep
Back beauty, keep it, beauty, beauty, ... from
vanishing away?
O is there no frowning of these wrinkles, ranked wrinkles
deep,
Down? no waving off of these most mournful messengers,
still messengers, sad and stealing messengers of grey?--
No there's none, there's none, O no there's none

"The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo" (Poems, 91)¹⁰

¹⁰ Here Hegel comes in again. The awareness of time as the determinating principle of human existence must have been a shock to Hopkins' fundamental attitude that disapproved of Hegel's philosophy of development and flux. I venture to say that the momentarily unsurmountable difficulty to achieve the finality of fixed Platonic forms also helped to throw Hopkins into the hopelessness and desolation of his Dublin days. This state of dejection would not cease before time could be stopped again, that is to say, before another great synthesis would bring forth a new, definite,

What was possible in St. Beuno, namely the expression of a transcendent past within a timeless present, is thwarted by Hopkins' orientation towards a now promising, now portentous here-after. Whereas sacramental vision allows of a linguistic realization of the past, the future cannot be uttered as realistic actuality: "Nor mouth had, no nor mind, expressed / What heart heard of, ghost guessed" ("Spring and Fall", Poems, 89). In "The Loss of the Eurydice" the poet is literally struck dumb for a moment even while he is conjuring up the long gone ideal meeting of heaven and earth: the reality of his generation's loss of faith makes him break away from what he wanted to say about the past towards an unutterable future:

Deeply surely I need to deplore it,
Wondering why my master bore it,
The riving off that race
So at home, time was, to his truth and grace
That a starlight-wender of ours would say
The marvellous Milk was Walsingham Way
And one--but let be, let be:
More, more than was will yet be.--

(Poems, 75)¹¹

"More than was will yet be" is all the poet can say, whereby it is not clear whether "more" suggests more delight or more

and timeless finality.

It is almost an irony of the fate that this unfolding of Hopkins himself, i.e. his development from the uncertainty of the Oxford poetry to the first great synthesis of St. Beuno's sacramental and incarnational vision, and then from man's innate antithesis to the second great synthesis of redemption and salvation bears all characteristics of Hegel's dialectic progress in time (cf. chapter 2, p. 11 and chapter 7, pp. 227-9).

¹¹ The line "The marvellous Milk was Walsingham Way" is a masterstroke because Hopkins achieves the (past) union of heaven and earth (of the Milky Way and the road to Mary's shrine at Walsingham) through association and homophony (**relating** "Milk" and "Way" through "whey") and subsequent alliteration (**connecting** "Way" with "Walsingham") in the reading of the sentence.

destruction. One way or another, there is every indication that the perspective of all these poems dealing with man's and nature's future destination exposes a poet in search of lost social and poetic fulfilment.

"Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" (1885) is the poem that sets a landmark within the poetic transition stage inaugurated after Hopkins had left Wales in 1878. It takes up several issues raised in the course of this chapter. First, the poem echoes a traditional element of Greek mythology, which underlines the poem's tendency for repeating, its falling back on a more imitative style; on the other hand, it still displays many elements of originality: it is written in sprung rhythm and confronts the reader with an unusual exterior shape, "the longest [sonnet] , I still say, ever made" (Letters to Bridges, 246). Thus it becomes clear once more that neither pure imitation nor pure originality can bring forth the poem; the existence of Hopkins' text is hinged on the compelling co-operation of both experiment and echo.

Second, the content of "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" shows forth the link between nightly disintegration of self and the problematics of mankind's salvation. Through an almost chromatic scale that recalls Hopkins' continuing fascination with sunsets in general, the setting day gives way to the dark night of an afterworld, a world after death providing the poet/questioner with God's obscure answer about the future course of things.¹²

¹² In sunsets the color red is very prominent: an incredible richness of red hues is displayed by them. Yet it becomes rapidly clear from such expressions as "lustrous gashes crimson white" ("A Vision of the Mermaids", Poems, 18),

By rendering the mostly sombre and cryptic truths of the ancient Cumaean Sibyl, Hopkins' poem becomes more than exegetical, is more than a simple interpretation of nature; it adopts all the characteristics of prophecy since the poem's essence is "spelt" in the sense of "found out" and "uttered": this sonnet, besides "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire", is the only poem attempting the actually impossible actualization of futurity.¹³

"Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves"

Earnest, earthless, equal, attuneable, vaulty, voluminous,
... stupendous
Evening strains to be time's vast, womb-of-all, home-of-all,
hearse-of-all night.
Her fond yellow hornlight wound to the west, her wild
hollow hoarlight hung to the height
Waste; her earliest stars, earlstars, stars principal, overbend
us,
Fire-featuring heaven. For earth her being has unbound; her
dapple is at end, as-
tray or aswarm, all throughther, in throngs; self in self
steeped and pashed--quite
Disremembering, dismembering all now. Heart, you round
me right
With: Our evening is over us; our night whelms, whelms,
and will end us.
Only the beakleaved boughs dragonish damask the tool-
smooth bleak light; black,

that Hopkins already saw wounds and blood in red light. The "bleeding red" of a beautiful sunset (Journals, 240) is associated with the five scarlet wounds of Christ's royal stigma:

But he scores it in scarlet himself on his own bespoken,
Before-time-taken, dearest prized and priced--
Stigma, signal, cinquefoil token
For lettering of the lamb's fleece, ruddying of the rose-flake.

The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanza 22 (Poems, 58)
Thus sunset and physical death are always in touch with each other.

¹³ "The Sibyl with raving mouth utters things mirthless and unadorned and unperfumed and her voice carries through a thousand years because of the god who speaks through her" (Heraclitus, "Fragment 34", op. cit., 45).

Ever so black on it. Our tale, O our oracle! Let life, waned
ah let life wind
Off her once skeined stained veined variety upon, all on two
spools; part, pen, pack
Now her all in two flocks, two folds--black, white, right,
wrong; reckon but, reck but, mind
But these two; ware of a world where but these two tell, each
off the other; of a rack
Where, selfwring, selfstrung, sheathe- and shelterless, thoughts
against thoughts in groans grind.

(Poems, 97-8)

The approach of night makes life's colorful multiplicity go
and fade away: the gay dappled complexity of the "king- /
dom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon" ("The
Windhover", Poems, 69) gives way to sombre undifferentiated
uniformity. Even the last lights illuminating the earth, the
soft yellow evening glow and the colder "wild hollow hoarlight"
only momentarily hold up this natural decline towards black
formlessness; the remaining, weak light wrests the last beau-
tiful "inscapes" from nature: "Beautiful blackness and defi-
nition of elm tree branches in evening light" (Journals, 137);
but, it cannot be more than a bad omen because the sublimity
of the branches turns into the uncanny ghostliness of "beak-
leaved boughs dragonish". Then the "inscapes" of the earth
are completely disappearing and disintegrating into absolute
darkness with regard to their variety of form and color. All
things are "disremembered" and "dismembered", buried in in-
distinct pulp and colorless oblivion, which means nothing
other than the inevitable annihilation of the "azure" of the
paradisial past once realized in Wales. To put it differently,
when the sun has ceased to stress the perceptive fullness
of each object by its energy and being, Christ, the sun of
humankind, whose Incarnation made possible the poet's mimetic
and selving vision, has departed the mundane World too; "for

life is night and all things are alike in the dark. [...] So then the world is again dark without him, because Christ the light of the world is gone" (Sermons, 39-40). Thus sinful man is left alone with his positive death: "Our nightwhelms,whelms and will end us".¹⁴

Christ's taking leave, so to speak, is a taking away of leaves i.e. the leaves of natural growth and also, as we gradually understand, the text-leaves produced by a poet who has lost his capacity for seeing things in their distinctiveness and selfhood: "I cast for comfort I can no more get / By groping round my comfortless, than blind / Eyes in their dark can day ... find" ("My own heart let me more have pity on", Poems, 102). During this process of unselving the only remaining clue are Sibyl's leaves from which the oracle is spelt. The longed for reality of its prophecy refers to a light of hope shining through complete darkness upon the face of a decomposed earth: "her earliest stars, earlstars, stars principal, overbend us, / Fire-featuring heaven". Thus the night destroys and saves; it is not only the end of life but also the source and beginning of a new one; the cyclic succession never ends: night follows day, the sadness of old age follows youth, death follows life--and vice versa. There is a constant sequence of decline and restoration.

As evening grows into night, the colored world as the mediator

¹⁴ Since falling snow, like the night, removes the distinctive qualities of things, it likewise takes on the aspect of death: "And death falls gently as the snow" ("Il Mystico", Poems, 111). Hopkins takes up the generally known parallelism between day/night and life/death in his sonnets of desolation: "all / Life death does end and each day dies with sleep" ("No worst", Poems, 100).

between self and God is reduced not to absolute nothingness but to the fundamental and inescapable contrast of black and white, wrong and right. The rich variety of form and color in every vein of earth's sweet but mortal being diminishes to woollen threads wound off on two separate spools of diverse color; moreover, Hopkins regards every being as belonging to flocks of white and black sheep in different pens. He does not consider their precise hue any longer, but divides them according to their general shade. In short, the approach of night is seen by the poet as a portent, not just of death, but of the judgement that follows death in the afterworld, the Last Judgement on the two extreme forms of selving, which opens up the alternative of endless darkness or eternal bliss.

It would seem that there must be some revelation of himself by God to the soul to awake the strain or nisus which is either to be gratified or denied. This revelation takes place through the species of a past life, by means of which, by instress of which God testifies that he is pleased or displeased and varies in its intensity with them. But it is one of attraction or repulsion, of yes or no, in any case.

God is good and the stamp, seal, or instress he sets on each scape is of right, good, or of bad, wrong (Sermons, 139).

"Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves", in the manner of a genuine oracle does not clearly indicate which pitch of self is the one for man to choose, black or white, right or wrong, yes or no, synthesis or antithesis; it only promises pain and self-conflict. Due to the closeness of worst and best this final decision-making, the last showdown so to speak, is like a "rack / Where selfwring, selfstrung, sheathe- and shelterless, thoughts against thoughts in groans grind". Yet, for the time being, Hopkins himself does not leave the shadow of a doubt which is the right decision to make in the course

of one's lifetime: man's choice must be the everlasting yes of bare acknowledgement. This response to God's finger touching the very vein of man's personality brings to mind Parmenides' idea of oneness: "Nothing is so pregnant and straightforward to the truth as simple yes and is" (Journals, 127).¹⁵ The everlasting yes also corresponds to the Ignatian election by which the eye of the self's intention ought to be looking only to the end for which it was created, the praise of God and the salvation of the soul. By saying yes the individual self overcomes the Fall, this sin of ignorance that fixed a false standard of right and wrong, and achieves a union with Christ Who personifies eternal assent.

As God is true, the language in which we address you is not an ambiguous blend of Yes and No. The Son of God, Christ Jesus, ... was never a blend of Yes and No. With him it was, and is, Yes (Corinthians, 2/18-9).¹⁶

Hopkins' theory of assent works up ideas from Cardinal Newman and Duns Scotus. Hopkins follows the latter's tenet holding that the will is the expression of individuality. He also makes the Scotist distinction between affective will, man's natural impulse or voluntas towards what is desirable, and elective will, man's free, conscious, Christ-directed, choice

¹⁵ See chapter 2, pp. 14-5

¹⁶ The finality of the everlasting yes which seems to be a decision in favor of the Parmenidean "Being" (the idea of oneness) and against "Not-Being" (the want of oneness) would then be supposed to rule out the union of contrasts, the "both ... and", in favor of the choice between extremes, the "either ... or". Yet the concluding chapter will show that man's final, everlasting, yes again implies a creative act embodying both being and not-being, which is a union of contrasts (cf. chapter 7, p. 226).

or arbitrium of the right answer and the good action:

By the will is meant that which decides action in us, arbitrium, or the faculty which is affected well or ill towards things, voluntas (Sermons, 142).

As long as Hopkins could discover man in his more ideal nature-like aspect, that is to say, as long as man's inborn antithesis did not play a prominent part in Hopkins' view of things, man's identification with an antithetical self-determination towards "wrong" and "bad" had automatically receded into the background. This is why Hopkins' poems about spring and about people in the spring of their life are poems about paradisial innocence which only leave the "good" alternative; in other words, perfect life in paradise restricts the freedom of choice between good and bad because the bad (man's inborn antithesis) was not yet a part of Eden. If there is no choice, the elective will, i.e. "the tendency in the soul towards an infinite object" (Sermons, 138), becomes one with the affective will:

Now when there is but one alternative, that is /
no alternative, when there is no choice, no freedom of field, the elective will always, without effort, passively, ratifies the spring of the affective will to action (Sermons, 152).

Young, guiltless people necessarily do the "right" thing: Fletcher, the sea-cadet, in contrast to most of his mates and the older people aboard, is rescued out of the "rivelling snowstorm" and the "wintry waves" that caused the wrecking of the "Eurydice" (Poems, 74). A child gives the "gracious answer" impelled by his heart's own inner impulse and acknowledgement: the heart imitates the Sacred Heart of Christ's most perfect character.

What the heart is! which, like carriers let fly--
Doff darkness homing nature knows the rest--
To its own fine function, wild and self-instressed,
Falls light as ten years long taught how to and why.

"The Handsome Heart" (Poems, 81)¹⁷

Moreover, only children embody the "strain of the earth's
sweet being in the beginning / In Eden Garden" ("Spring",
Poems, 67), but youth is not spared the Fall:

Have, get, before it cloy,
Before it cloud, Christ, Lord, and sour with sinning,
Innocent mind and Mayday in girl and boy,
Most, O maid's child, thy choice and worthy the winning
"Spring" (Poems, 67)

With the first move of evil within the world of man and the poet's simultaneous anxiety about man's potential consent to identify with the "wrong" or "bad" pitch of antithetical being, the arbitrium comes into play adequately: "The arbitrium is indeed free towards all alternatives, even though one of them should be absolute evil, evil in itself" (Sermons, 149). The elective will gets the full scope between the everlasting yes that places man's personality "on a level of individuality in some sense with God" (Sermons, 139), and the everlasting no that sweeps man away to an infinite distance from God: "and the stress and strain of his removal is his eternity of punishment" (ibid.). "But may he not rankle and roam / In backwheels though bound home?" Hopkins muses about the destiny of the bugler boy who has come to him for

¹⁷ Note in particular the comparison of the heart in its ideal, innocent state and the bird finding both the "right" way (between heaven and earth). Cf. also The Wreck of the Deutschland stanza 3: "My heart, but you were dovewinged, I can tell, / Carrier-witted, I am bold to boast" (Poems, 52).

First Communion ("The Bugler's First Communion", Poems, 83); and the poet hopes that his prayers will be heard and a "favourable heaven" will grant to the boy the grace of bringing forth his "good" and "right" pitch of being.

It is therefore by the exercise of the elective will that man's nature is perfected in the moral sphere: the affective will "instressed" or affected by God's grace towards the good He proposes is then freely accepted (or refused) by the arbitrium; thus desire and choice are united. The everlasting yes accordingly stands for man's willingly choosing God's and Christ's grace, the great synthesis or correspondence that counteracts the loss of original innocence:

For there must be something which shall be truly the creature's in the work of corresponding with grace: this is the arbitrium, the verdict on God's side, the saying Yes, the 'doing-agree' (to speak barbarously), and looked at in itself, such a nothing is the creature before its creator, it is found to be no more than the mere wish, discernible by God's eyes, that it might do as he wishes, might correspond, might say Yes to him; correspondence itself is on man's side not so much corresponding as the wish to correspond, and this least sigh of desire, this one aspiration, is the life and spirit of man. [...]

And by this infinitesimal act the creature does what in it lies to bridge the gulf fixed between its present actual and worser pitch of will and its future better one (Sermons; 154-5).

Although "the consent of the will to right or wrong may be unaccompanied by action" (Sermons, 143), the influence of Cardinal Newman's Grammar of Assent especially puts the literal performance of the imitation of Christ, the "doing-agree", in the place of the merely linguistic utterance of the everlasting yes by means of poetry's Imitatio Christi. Newman's sensuous, intuitive, real assent in religious matters

which follows an intellectual or notional assent is most likely to lead to action.¹⁸

Thus Hopkins' 'new' poems aim at the behaviour of human actors called "Felix Randal", "Harry Ploughman", or at nameless performers such as a bugler, two brothers, a young child or a soldier. It can be assumed that the admiration for these people's active determination towards "right" originates in the typically Hopkinsian relation of pitch and performance. Just as, in a musical sense, the pitch of a poem-"inscape" was brought out by its being spoken or sung (cf. below), man's individual performance brings about the pitch of self-being which is according to God's will. In a bold transfer from the level of artistic creation to the level of human existence Hopkins extends poetry's purely creative perspective by the performative aspect of life. His insistence on the (spoken) text as the perfect imitation of Christ evolves into the firm belief that man had to live a proper life in order to reach the final understanding and fullness of being. It is true that a poetry which represents the performance of the everlasting yes fulfills its archetypal purpose in so far as it symbolizes life and its rhythm imitates the heart-beat of existence, but it is bound to depart from a genuine Imitatio Christi because, in Hopkins' view, the "good" and "right" performance must eventually lead to (human and poetic) self-sacrifice; "The Handsome Heart's" strain that cultivates man's positive determination ("O on that path you pace / Run all your race, O brace sterner that strain!", Poems, 82) is identical with the evening's strain "to be time's

¹⁸ Hopkins knew the Grammar very well, even asked Newman for permission to write a commentary upon it, but the Cardinal gently refused this request (cf. Further Letters, 58-9).

vast, womb-of-all, home-of-all, hearse-of-all night" ("Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves", Poems, 97). Thus Hopkins specifically recognizes the pitch of self-determination in people who live up to their calling, even if it means death. The conduct of part of the "Eurydice's" crew is a case in point:

Marcus Hare, high her captain,
Kept to her--care-drowned and wrapped in
 Cheer's death, would follow
His charge through the champ-white water-in-a-wallow,
All under Channel to bury in a beach her
Cheeks: Right, rude of feature,
 He thought he heard say
'Her commander! and thou too, and thou this way.'
It is even seen, time's something server,
In mankind's medley a duty-swerwer,
 At downright 'No or Yes?'
Doffs all, drives full for righteousness.

"The Loss of the Eurydice", 45-56 (Poems, 73-4)

Hopkins even describes a ghastly "sea corpse cold" as "strung by duty" and "strained to beauty" (*ibid.*), because those who "act the right part at a great push" (Letters to Bridges, 53) become one and identify with the yes of Christ on Calvary.

Due to the fact that Hopkins' one goal in life was the imitation of Christ, he felt that the end for which man was made consisted in contributing to Christ's sacrifice.¹⁹ The "Golden Echo", actually a fragment of a dramatic play about St. Winefred, hints at the two different kinds of self-sacrifice: the immolation of the human self and the giving away of the poetic expression of self. Only are their issues interwoven within the complicated structure of the poem so that they seem to be one and the same giving back of being. The first way to arrest the transience of beauty and to give it eternal value is "not within seeing of the sun",

¹⁹ Cf. Sermons, p. 129.

that is to say, it is evoked by time's nightfall just as in "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves", or, to put it adequately, by the death of the individual, the persona, the poet, i.e. Hopkins himself.

There is one, yes I have one (Hush there!),
[way to keep back beauty from vanishing away]
Only not within seeing of the sun.
Not within the singeing of the strong sun,
Tall sun's tingeing, or treacherous the tainting of the earth's air
Somewhere elsewhere there is ah well where! one,
One. Yes I can tell such a key, I do know such a place

"The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo" (Poems, 92)

Since one's own death, to say nothing of suicide, is an issue out of the question at this point, Hopkins can either only allude to the fact that physical death would triumph over one's own mortality, or he has to refer to it as an objective outsider/observer who witnesses but does not experience the redemption in death. The poet has to look for other ways to share the self-sacrifice of Christ.

Come then, your ways and airs and looks, locks, maidengear,
gallantry and gaiety and grace,
Winning ways, airs innocent, maiden manners, sweet looks,
loose locks, long locks, lovelocks, gaygear, going gallant,
girlgrace--
Resign them, sign them, seal them, send them, motion them
with breath,
And with sighs soaring, soaring sighs, deliver
Them; beauty-in-the-ghost, deliver it, early now, long before
death
Give beauty back, beauty, beauty, beauty, back to God,
Beauty's self and beauty's giver.

"The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo"
(Poems, 92, emphasis mine)

For this reason it is also possible to save mortal beauty from vanishing away and to turn it into immortal beauty by sacrificing one's "innocent airs", one's utterance of self, i.e. the poem: the return of one's artistic creation to its heavenly origin while it is worth being consumed is a substi-

tute for the imitation of Christ's self-sacrifice on the cross, which can be realized during one's lifetime, "early now, long before death".

During this retreat I have much and earnestly prayed that God will lift me above myself to a higher state of grace, in which I may have more union with him, be more zealous to do his will, and freer from sin. [...]

Also in some med. today I earnestly asked our Lord to watch over my compositions, not to preserve them from being lost or coming to nothing, for that I am very willing they should be, but they might not do me harm through the enmity or imprudence of any man or my own; that he should have them as his own and employ or not employ them as he should see fit. And this I believe is heard (Sermons, 253-4).

Hopkins saw his poems as a gift to be given back to God in return to heavenly grace which had ultimately inspired them. This offering is Hopkins' everlasting yes that lends literal wings to his efforts at personal fulfilment and salvation, but that would only be completed when physical death would put an irrevocable end to his poetic creativity. No wonder sunsets are associated with the end of song: life's winding "Off her once skeined stained veined variety upon all on two spools" ("Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves", Poems, 98) takes up the image of the skylark's "rash-fresh new-skeined score" that is whirled "in crisps of curl off wild winch" pouring and pelting music, "till none's to spill nor spend" ("The Sea and the Skylark", Poems, 68). The destruction of nature's dapple at night and the sacrifice of linguistic "inscapes" are closely interrelated being both marked by a painful and wearisome consumption of incarnational beauty. Yet they do not receive their finality before physical death will definitely sanction the everlasting yes and turn it into the second great synthesis.

7 . THE SECOND GREAT SYNTHESIS :

Completing the Imitatio Christi
through the Final Stability
of the Ego's Silence

Alfred Lord Tennyson once said that he believed in God, not from what he saw in nature but from what he saw in man. Gerard Manley Hopkins' faith similarly shifts its point of reference from the macrocosm of the natural world to the microcosm of mankind and, finally, to the individual human being, to the poet, to Hopkins himself. In fact, the autobiographical dark-night series of seven 'terrible' sonnets constitutes an inner dialogue, a prayer turning over the issues of torment and despair and the eventual possibility of comfort and consolation.

It is the goal of this chapter to throw light on the poet's introspection which, after having led the self through a wasteland of conflict, struggle, and distress "Where, selfwring, selfstrung, sheathe- and shelterless, thoughts against thoughts in groans grind" ("Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves", Poems, 98), finally results in the second 'great synthesis' of fulfilment and salvation. In the course of this personal Odyssey artistic creation is considerably affected: in order to come home to Christ and to reach the end of his journey (final point and final aim) Hopkins has to consciously come to the end of his life and gradually realize the end of his

poetic creativity along with it; "inscapes" in nature and poetry have to dissolve when immanence yields to definite transcendence.

From Contemplative Vision to Introspective Experience

The so-called 'terrible' sonnets or 'sonnets of desolation' which Hopkins wrote while he was practising the cumbersome profession of a Classics teacher at the Royal University of Ireland in Dublin lack his earlier poems' richness of visual nature imagery. Hopkins' abandonment of nature as the chief figurative mode of visionary expression was thematically heralded by the dissolution of nature's integrity in transitional poems such as "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves": nightly disintegration indicates the suppression of sight, the faculty Hopkins had venerated above all others because it made possible the perception of exterior reality which, in turn, confirmed self-existence and established sacramental vision. Overcome by the new reign of darkness around him, the poet turns to reflect on himself, on his individual significance. The approach of the night becomes an experience of his own spiritual state, a look inside the tenebrosity of his soul. Through this in-turning of the poetic attention by means of which the mind becomes the only reality, the contact with the external world is blocked; St. Beuno's supreme union of Christ and self in meditative Ignatian colloquy is entirely eliminated. Introversion deeply personalizes Christianity and thus restricts the system of communication to Dublin's dull speech of a desolate self: soliloquy.

Hopkins makes the terrifying and disconcerting observation that actual emptiness, unfulfilment, and meaninglessness which he had first discovered in man's sinfulness and then in nature's collapse, did not spare him either.

But man can know God, can mean to give him glory. This then was why he was made, to give God glory and to mean to give it; to praise God freely, willingly to reverence him, gladly to serve him. Man was made to give, and mean to give, God glory.

I WAS MADE FOR THIS, each one of us was made for this.

Does man then do it? Never mind others now nor the race of man: DO I DO IT?--If I sin I do not: how can I dishonour God and honour him? wilfully dishonour him and yet be meaning to honour him? choose to disobey him and mean to serve him? No, we have not answered God's purposes, we have not reached the end of our being (Sermons, 239-40, last emphasis mine).

With the fall of night the perception of the world's dapple is once and for all superseded by the experience of gnawing disruption: the "fell of dark" along with subsequent introspection gives rise to an inner strife of the self as well as its separation from God. Nature loses its sacramental value because it is transformed into interior landscapes of sorrow. The apprehension of God becomes one of wrath only and not of grace: "comforter where, where is your comforting?" ("No worst there is none", Poems, 100); and man's heart which used to be brimful with joy turns into the place of spiritual drought. Bereft of his metaphysical reference point, the persona has lost all his bearings, which is manifested by the indeterminacy of the sensory functions and the confusion of temporal categories:

I wake and feel the fell of dark, not day.
What hours, O what black hours we have spent
This night! what sights you, heart, saw; ways you went!
And more must, in yet longer light's delay.

With witness I speak this. But where I say
Hours I mean years, mean life. And my lament
Is cries countless, cries like dead letters sent
To dearest him that lives alas! away.

I am gall, I am heartburn. God's most deep decree
Bitter would have me taste: my taste was me;
Bones built in me, flesh filled, blood brimmed the curse.

Selfyeast of spirit a dull dough sours. I see
The lost are like this, and their scourge to be
As I am mine, their sweating selves; but worse.

(Poems, 101)

In a world that has verged towards nightmare Hopkins' primordial feeling for his own pitch of distinctiveness is incapacitated and turns into its opposite: "selfyeast of spirit a dull dough sours." This organic and spiritual deformity leaves the speaker in helpless desolation and solitary despair because he experiences the imitation of Christ as a hopeless aspiration and a futile endeavor; he does not believe in his own salvation; Christ is out of reach: "And my lament / Is cries countless, cries like dead letters sent / To dearest him that lives alas! away." The pervasiveness of personal sin tends to carry Hopkins away into completing the negative kind of selving, the 'everlasting no' to which the damned had succumbed: "I see / The lost are like this, and their scourge to be / As I am mine, their sweating selves; but worse." The lostness in hell is absolute, without the trace of a choice left, and therefore it is even "worse". The poet nevertheless almost assents to the blasphemy of choosing "not to be" ("Carrion Comfort", Poems, 99):

The times are nightfall, look, their light grows less;
The times are winter, watch, a world undone:
They waste, they wither worse; they as they run
Or bring more or more blazon man's distress.
And I not help. Nor word now of success:
All is from wreck, here, there, to rescue one--
Work which to see scarce so much as begun
Makes welcome death, does dear forgetfulness.

(Poems, 186, emphasis mine)

Spiritual desolation manifests itself in various forms. Besides the longing for death caused by the failure of spiritual perfection in the union with Christ, contempt for the world, remorse for sin, desire for divine affection and heavenly solace are unequivocal signs. Yet the dejection and depression from which Hopkins suffered in Dublin was above all due to the separation from everything outside himself.

To seem the stranger lies my lot, my life
Among strangers. Father and mother dear,
Brothers and sisters are in Christ not near
And he my peace / my parting, sword and strife.

England, whose honour O all my heart woos, wife
To my creating thought, would neither hear
Me, were I pleading, plead nor do I: I weary
Of idle a being but by where wars are rife.

I am in Ireland now; now I am at a third
Remove. Not but in all removes I can
Kind love both give and get. Only what word

Wisest my heart breeds dark heaven's baffling ban
Bars or hell's spell thwarts. This to hoard unheard,
Heard unheeded, leaves me a lonely began.

(Poems, 101)

Hopkins particularly felt this isolation to be a removal from even the slightest chance of self-fulfilment. The poet becomes gradually aware that he has only been the observer of supreme salvation in nature and other individuals; the figures, i.e. the mostly manual laborers who populate the poems of Hopkins' post-St. Beuno era suggest the sad and striking contrast between their courage, their strength and transfiguration of suffering into triumph and the situation of the lyrical self who yearns for a similar achievement of his own in order to do justice to a genuine, performative Imitatio Christi. It is true that "inscape" and "instress", i.e. sacramental vision in general, imparted to the observer the insight into the truth and beauty of Incarnation and even Salvation, but,

they do not give rise to the onlooker's or listener's appropriate personal salutary performance:

March 17 St. Patrick--Recommend first to God the whole course of his life, thanking God for the way he is glorified in him; his exile and sufferings, his piety and patience; his selfsacrifice and zeal; his miracles and success. Consider his hymn: it breathes an enthusiasm which as far as feeling goes I feel but my action does not answer to this (Sermons, 260).

The nature of the bond between the hero who accomplishes the everlasting yes in final triumph and the observer who is a witness to this feat does not surpass mutual sympathy and endearment:

Sickness broke him. Impatient, he cursed at first, but mended Being anointed and all; though a heavenlier heart began some Months earlier, since I had our sweet reprieve and ransom Tendered to him. Ah well, God rest him all road ever he offended!

This seeing the sick endears them to us, us too it endears.
My tongue had taught thee comfort, touch had quenched thy tears,
Thy tears that touched my heart, child, Felix, poor Felix Randal;

"Felix Randal" (Poems, 86-7)

In all these poems that manifest the individual's success ("Felix Randal", "Brothers", "The Handsome Heart", "The Soldier", or "The Bugler's First Communion") the poet stays back as an ancillary element who merely records and reproduces the event: "That left to the Lord of the Eucharist, I here lie by; / Recorded only, I have put my lips on pleas" ("The Bugler's First Communion", Poems, 83, emphasis mine).

Supposedly the task and the duty of the poet-priest are not discharged by writing the poem; the creation of the text and the poet's privilege to "tell", as I called it in an earlier chapter, had been found an ideal instance of the imitation of Christ, but now they turn out to

be ineffective because the text is conceived at a range that admittedly does not exclude sympathetic involvement but certainly rules out active mimesis:

Away in the loveable west,
On a pastoral forehead of Wales,
I was under a roof here, I was at rest,
And they the prey of the gales;

The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanza 24 (Poems, 59)

The poet's passive, contemplative attitude stands in stark and forbidding contrast to the ordeal of self-sacrifice that the seven nuns of the Deutschland undergo in the raging elements at the time of the wreck. Whereas the speaker stands about idly in the "loveable west" (emphasis mine), one of the nuns remembers the historical Jesus on the cross, and in her longing to be united with the risen Christ in heaven, recognizes Him as the ultimate object of imitation and inspiration: she gives in to the utterance of the everlasting yes:

Till a lioness arose breasting the babble,
A prophetess towered in the tumult, a virginal tongue told.

[...]

Sister, a sister calling
A master, her master and mine!--
And the inboard seas run swirling and hawling;
The rash smart slogging brine
Blinds her; but she that weather sees one thing, one;
Has one fetch in her: she rears herself to divine
Ears, and the call of the tall nun
To the men in the tops and the tackle rode over the storm's
brawling.

[...]

She to the black-about air, to the breaker, the thickly
Falling flakes, to the throng that catches and quails
Was calling 'O Christ, Christ, come quickly':
The cross to her she calls Christ to her, christens her wild-wors
Best.

The Wreck of the Deutschland,
stanzas 17, 19, 24 (Poems, 57, 59)

This choice of "right" and "good" will carry the nuns to heaven,

to the "crimson cresseted east" (The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanza 35, Poems, 63, emphasis mine).¹

There then! the Master,
Ipse, the only one, Christ, King, Head:
He was to cure the extremity where he had cast her;
Do, deal, lord it with living and dead;
Let him ride, her pride, in his triumph, despatch and have done
with his doom there.

The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanza 28 (Poems, 60)

Evidently personal salvation demands an achievement which exceeds the appearance of passive identification and results in a genuine fusion of the acting self and his hero. Since such an act of the lyrical I seems to be out of the question for the time being, the future becomes again the focal point of the poet's longing. The glorious past of accomplished fulfillment is blotted out of man's memory, and the only remedy against constant fatigue, depression, and melancholy is a yearning hope for change: "I think that my fits of sadness, though they do not affect my judgement, resemble madness. Change is the only relief, and that I can seldom get" (Letters to Bridges, 216).²

In an unfinished and untitled poem of this period Hopkins revealingly wrote that "Hope holds to Christ the mind's own mirror out / To take His lovely likeness more and more" (Poems, 186). Hope is the human activity which promises the individual's progressive union with Christ; but, by means of intro-

¹ Cf. the same opposition of west and east in "God's Grandeur" (chapter 6, p. 141).

² See also Letters to Bridges, 214-5: "... , but in that coffin of weakness and defection in which I live, without even the hope of change, I do not know that I can make or, making, could keep up the exertion of learning better."

ducing time's resilience that can reinterpret hours as years sullyng the whole of life, salvation is also indeterminably deferred.³ Hopkins' apprehension of time is therefore double-bound: the work of time 'unselves', wipes out all signs of individuality in the world, makes incarnational beauty disappear; it bears the same characteristics as death; at the same time, however, it leads straight to the world of potential bliss after death in which it is again annihilated in favor of the timeless presence of the second great synthesis (cf. "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves"). Suicide and the wish for death oppose this natural process towards completion; that is why such thoughts are rejected as soon as they have come to the speaker's mind, although their stringency seems to be overpowering in the beginning.

What is my wretched life? five wasted years almost have passed in Ireland. I am ashamed of the little I have done, of my waste of time, although my helplessness and weakness is such that I could scarcely do otherwise. And yet the Wise Man warns us against excusing ourselves in that fashion. I cannot then be excused; but what is life without aim, without spur, without help? All my undertakings miscarry: I am like a straining eunuch. I wish then for death:

3 "But where I say / Hours I mean years, mean life" ("I wake and feel the fell of dark", Poems, 101). This focus on the future beautifully fits into a renewed look into the vague and hazy distance; "yonder" is the place where beauty can be eternally preserved and where the solution to all difficulties is to be found (cf. chapter 3, pp. 30-1).

When the thing we freely forfeit is kept with fonder a care,
Fonder a care kept than we could have kept it, kept
Far with fonder a care (and we, we should have lost it) finer,
fonder
A care kept.--Where kept? do but tell us where kept, where.--
Yonder.--What high as that! We follow, now we follow.--
Yonder, yes yonder, yonder,
Yonder.

yet if I died now I should die imperfect, no master of myself and that is the worst failure of all. O my God, look down on me (Sermons, 262).

"I have life left with me still / And thy purpose to fulfill; / Yea a debt to pay thee yet," Hopkins cries out and goes on imploring God: "Help me, sir, and so I will" ("Thee, God, I come from", Poems, 194). Yet to fulfill this purpose and to pay his debt, the poet must get away from his contemplative attitude and assimilate his own life and doings into nature's gradual striving towards the end of the seasonal cycle and Christ's (and man's) analogous completing surrender in dire straits, because the natural phenomenon as well as the biblical event portend the new beginning of (eternal) life.

Patience is the cardinal virtue which permits Hopkins to depart from idle passivity and proceed to a salutary performance by way of impregnating future prospects with present activity.

Patience, hard thing! the hard thing but to pray,
But bid for, Patience is! Patience who asks
Wants war, wants wounds; weary his times, his tasks;
To do without, take tosses, and obey.

Rare patience roots in these, and these away,
Nowhere. Natural heart's ivy, Patience masks
Our ruins of past purpose. There she basks
Purple eyes and seas of liquid leaves all day.

We hear our hearts grate on themselves: it kills
To bruise them dearer. Yet the rebellious wills
Of us we do bid God bend to him even so.

And where is he who more and more distills
Delicious kindness?--He is patient. Patience fills
His crisp combs, and that comes those ways we know.

(Poems, 103)

The emulation of Christ's patience which "fills / His crisp combs" makes the soul emerge in a purity which makes it more worthy to obtain a close union with Christ although (and

because!) it causes terrible pain in the heart.⁴ Patience, on the one hand, is a powerful consolation in days of torment since it does not only "mask / Our ruins of wrecked past purpose", but also "basks / Purple eyes and seas of liquid leaves all day" (emphasis mine); patience exposes the poet's heart to Christ's sun and thereby promises a happier present and future: it is the patience left by Christ that grows to peace which, in the shape of the famous bird, restores harmony within the speaker's disrupted self:

O surely, reaving Peace, my Lord should leave in lieu
Some good! And so he does leave Patience exquisite,
That plumes to Peace thereafter. And when Peace here does
house
He comes with work to do, he does not come to coo,
He comes to brood and sit.

"Peace" (Poems, 85)

On the other hand, patience "Wants war, wants wounds", casts the persona into an apocalyptic fight, a fact which is elucidated by a closer analysis of the significance of the color purple.

Purple is a color which is rarely used by Hopkins. Moreover, he restricts its application: purple is the color of the sky in stormy weather which causes thunder and lightning. So in "Henry Purcell", in which the color of the clouds is reflected in the wet beach: "The thunder-purple seabeach plumed purple-

⁴ The biblical concept of patience ("You need endurance, if you are to do God's will and win what he has promised", Hebrews, 10/36) frequently occurs in Hopkins' later poetry, so in "Andromeda": "All while her patience morselled into pangs, / Mounts;" (Poems, 85), "Peace", "Felix Randal", or "St. Alphonsus Rodriguez". It is very suggestive that Hopkins, in all these poems, remains true to the principle set forth in Hebrews, namely that patience and endurance are closely related to palpable experience and less to submissive acquiescence.

of-thunder" (Poems, 80). Purple acquires the weight of an omen; it points to something about to happen which will be impressive, unknown, and perhaps dreadful. Caradoc, after having murdered Winefred, feels that the purpling sky stands for God's wrath and ordains his destiny:

Therefore airy vengeance
Are afoot; heaven-vault fast purpling portends, and what
first lightning
Any instant falls means me.

"St. Winefred's Well" (Poems, 190)

The "purple eyes" of "Patience" symbolize the dark berries of the ivy basking like bathers floating among the gently surging leaves. Yet this is only a superficial view; the phonetic relationship of the normal carrier of the colour purple, the sky, and of the unusual one, the eye, suggests a close semantic connection. Furthermore, the most logical way of combining two things is by giving them the same color shade. The semantic connection between 'sky' and 'eye' corresponds to the contrast of macrocosm and microcosm: the purple sky promises a thunderstorm and therefore stands for a precarious future in general, probably death; purple is the last stage before the sinister, sombre and cold night begins. The "purple eyes" mean the same on the level of Hopkins the introspective individual; they anticipate the "groping blind eyes in their dark" of the following sonnet of desolation ("My own heart let me more have pity on", Poems, 111). In other words, the purple eyes are a synonym for Hopkins' own dark and gloomy prospects.

This particular use of nature imagery for patience shows very well that this human virtue represents a spiritualization of **the** natural world's steady motion towards closure. Thus the

poet gets a bit closer to the end of his being as well; all the more than to possess one's soul in patience entails the individual's willingness to face the toil, trouble and torment of spiritual fighting.⁵ Patience, to put it differently, is supposed to turn the poet-observer into a soldier-performer: the change from contemplative vision to introspective experience is not only a descent into the darkness of a desolate soul but also an ascent to the knowledge that spiritual perfection lies in one's own, actively struggling self.

Come you indoors, come home; your fading fire
Mend first and vital candle in close heart's vault:
You there are master, do your own desire;

"The Candle Indoors" (Poems, 81)

His personal fight with Christ which Hopkins describes in "Carriion Comfort" is therefore not the expression of the soul's complete breakdown in painful torment and paralyzing bewilderment as the repeated why?-questions would suggest, but the evidence of a breakthrough to a greater and richer religious consciousness: the "carrion comfort, Despair" and its attendant Desolation which are caused by permanent abandonment and unbridgeable remoteness⁶ are overcome in an inner struggle that reduces and eventually dissolves the material distance between the speaker and Christ.

⁵ In Hopkins' later writings 'end' always employs the above-mentioned ambiguity: final point and aim.

⁶ In his notes on the Spiritual Exercises Hopkins quotes Ignatius' fourth rule "for the Discernment of Spirits" as follows: "Of spiritual desolation, I call that desolation which is contrary to what is set down in the third rule, such as darkness and confusion of soul, attraction towards low and earthly objects, disquietude caused by various agi-

"(Carrion Comfort)"

Not, I'll not, carrion comfort, Despair, not feast on thee;
Not untwist--slack they may be--these last strands of man
In me or, most weary, cry I can no more. I can
Can something, hope, wish day come, not choose not to be.

But ah, but O thou terrible, why wouldst thou rude on me
Thy wring-world right foot rock? lay a lionlimb against me?
scan

With darksome devouring eyes my bruised bones? and fan,
O in turns of tempest, me heaped there; me frantic to avoid
thee and flee?

Why? That my chaff might fly; my grain lie, sheer and clear.
Nay in all that toil, that coil, since (seems) I kissed the rod,
Hand rather, my heart lo! lapped strength, stole joy, would
laugh, cheer.

Cheer whom though? The hero whose heaven-handling flung
me, foot trod

Me? or me that fought him? O which one? is it each one?
That night, that year

Of now done darkness I wretch lay wrestling with (my God!)
my God.

(Poems, 100)

The image of the fight unites the two struggling bodies into one moving mass; this impression is enhanced by the tension of enjambment and the grammatical jumble of 'subject' and 'object': "Cheer whom though? The hero whose heaven-handling flung me, foot trod / Me? or me that fought him? O which one? is it each one?" Paradoxically, physical clash as manifest trope of antagonism gives prominence to a stage of imminent recovery of harmony and peace. This is why Hopkins can flash back to "That night, that year" of the struggle from a spiritually higher actual level "of now done darkness" (emphasis mine).

The paradox of the fight, that is to say, the fact that the conscious ("my God!") wrestling of the speaker with his God simultaneously reconciles him with Him, ob-

tations and temptations, which move the soul to diffidence without hope and without love, so that it finds itself altogether slothful, tepid, sad, and as it were separated from its **Creator** and Lord (Sermons, 204).

viously recalls Jacob's struggle with the Angel, this mysterious trial in the course of which the master wants to test his servant's resistance. Since, in biblical terms, Jacob's personal human struggle with Christ symbolizes every saint's fight against the power of evil and its temptations towards weariness and despair, Hopkins' strife with Christ shows the conflict at its most vulnerable point, namely when facing the 'everlasting no' within the self.⁷ Just as Jacob, who, although physically injured, is the victor in the nightlong contest, proves himself and wins God's favor, Hopkins, although the vast blackness of despair seems to bear down on him as implacably as does night upon the world, becomes unflinchingly resolved not to give way to wrong by deserting Christ: "Not, I'll not ... cry I can no more. I can." For the first time since his conversion ("since (seems) I kissed the rod / Hand rather") Hopkins gives up his position of contemplative passivity that for instance made him assume an attitude of opposition to the motion "Men make circumstances and not circumstances men" in one of the 'debates' during the years of theological studies at St. Beuno. The speaker's fight with Christ, is an active and wilful attempt to make circumstances, an introspective adventure which follows Thomas à Kempis' Of the Imitation of Christ very closely: "Be thou, therefore prepared to fight if thou desirest to gain the victory. With-

⁷ "For instance the will addressed, 'at forepitch', towards beatitude, happiness, in God, [is encountered] with its own act of aversion, with the scape or species, indurated in it, of the act by which it turned aside; the understanding open wide like an eye, towards truth in God, towards light, is confronted by that scape, that act of its own which blotted out God and so put blackness in the place of light (Sermons, 138).

out conflict thou canst not attain the crown of patience."⁸

Seen from this angle, suffering and desolation, being already part of the human condition, become part of Christian perfection too: they are darkness, but they bring forth the light, because, as Hopkins wrote to Cardinal Newman in 1884, "perhaps the things of most promise with God begin with weakness and fear" (Further Letters, 63). The voluntarily taking upon oneself sufferings of one form or another and the vigorously combating subsequent despair makes man's imitation of Christ's exemplary passion and death sweet and acceptable:

Think not thyself wholly forsaken, though for a time I have sent thee some tribulation, or withdrawn from thee thy wished for consolation; for this is the way to the kingdom of heaven."⁹

From Oxford to Dublin: The "Deutschland" and the "Eurydice"

In a previous chapter I have already briefly pointed at the similarity of the verse written in Oxford in the 1860s and the poems produced in Dublin in the 1880s.¹⁰ Both these periods of Hopkins' creative life share the orientation towards

⁸ Thomas à Kempis, Of the Imitation of Christ, transl. by Justin Mc Cann, Westminster, 1952, 235. Note Ignatius' eighth rule "for the Discernment of Spirits" in this context: "Let him who is in desolation strive to remain in patience" (Sermons, 204), and consider Hopkins' comment: "So that while we strive, though we commit faults, we are not lukewarm; when we give up struggling and let ourselves drift, then tepidity begins" (ibid., 208).

⁹ Thomas à Kempis, op.cit., 275

¹⁰ Cf. chapter 3, pp. 34-5

an indeterminate future and the melancholic gaze into the distance of a promising "yonder". Oxford's wistful fancy of distant and future fulfilment (and thus of present fiction) reappears in the 'terrible' sonnets when the poet discovers the pathway towards the "yonder"-world of celestial comfort and completion:

Soul, self; come, poor Jackself, I do advise
You, jaded, let be; call off thoughts awhile
Elsewhere; leave comfort root-room; let joy size
At God knows when to God knows what; whose smile
's not wrung, see you; unforeseen times rather--as skies
Betweenpie mountains--lights a lovely mile.

"My own heart let me more have pity on" (Poems, 103)¹¹

Furthermore Oxford and Dublin have in common the painful accounts and notations of the persona's acts of self-denial and renunciation, as well as the awareness of his struggle with a resistant divinity; the conclusion of one of Hopkins' earliest poems anticipates "Carrion Comfort's" "wrestling with (my God!) my God":

My heaven is brass and iron my earth:
Yea iron is mingled with my clay,
So harden'd is it in this dearth
Which praying fails to do away.
Nor tears, nor tears this clay uncouth
Could mould, if any tears there were.
A warfare of my lips in truth,
Battling with God, is now my prayer.

"My prayers must meet a brazen heaven" (Poems, 27)

¹¹ As soon as hope and happiness come into play the future is emphasized accordingly: "There is a happiness, hope, the anticipation of happiness hereafter: it is better than happiness, but it is not happiness now. It is as if one were dazzled by a spark or star in the dark, seeing it but not seeing by it: we want a light shed on our way and a happiness spread over our life" (Sermons, 262).

On the one hand, the recognition of one's own nothingness (which is to be ended by death exclusively) and of one's unique and ever wilder experience of pain and grief lends the frame to the 'sonnets of desolation' and specifically forms the beginning and the conclusion of the untitled poem 65:

No worst, there is none. Pitched past pitch of grief,
More pangs will, schooled at forepangs, wilder wring.

[...]

Wretch, under a comfort serves in a whirlwind: all
Life death does end and each day dies with sleep.

"No worst, there is none" (Poems, 100)

On the other hand, death as the final, inevitable, yet soothing way out of a state of continuing insignificance was also at the forefront of Hopkins' mind twenty years earlier:

--I am like a slip of comet,
Scarce worth discovery, in some corner seen
Bridging the slender difference of two stars,
Come out of space, or suddenly engender'd
By heady elements, for no man knows:
But when she sights the sun she grows and sizes
And spins her skirts out, while her central star
Shakes its cocooning mists; and so she comes
To fields of light; millions of travelling rays
Pierce her; she hangs upon the flame-cased sun,
And sucks the light as full as Gideon's fleece:
But then her tether calls her; she falls off,
And as she dwindles shreds her smock of gold
Amidst the sistering planets, till she comes
To single Saturn, last and solitary;
And then goes out into the cavernous dark.
So I go out: my little sweet is done:
I have drawn heat from this contagious sun:
To not ungentle death now forth I run.

(Poems, 147-8)

It may be worth noting here that the loss of the golden brilliance of things in nature and the analogous bereavement of the alchemist's synthesis and the poet's sacramental vision were foreshadowed by the dwindling of the comet's (and man's) "smock of gold" and their eventual plunging into the dark-

ness of death. The stunning clash of life and death, as it is brought into view by the immediate sequence of the two opposing terms at the end of "No worst, there is none" is an integral part of Hopkins' early poetry too: there seems to be only a short step from "Spring and Death" (1863 or 1864, Poems, 13-4) to "Spring and Fall" (1880, ibid., 88-9); yet whereas the speaker in "Spring and Death" dreams of the "dismal mirky stamp" of Death prematurely marking "With a subtle web of black" the flowers that would be taken away in the autumn, the lyrical I of "Spring and Fall" is confronted with the absolute certainly of Goldengrove's unleaving and man's mortality.

Each of these parallelisms between the Oxford poetry and the Dublin sonnets highlights and dramatizes the two prominent, related, yet different events of Hopkins' biography: his conversion and his death; actually Oxford and Dublin, these two stages of religious verve and of poetic position-finding, stand on the threshold of new issues of Hopkins' individual mimetic life: just as the poet's conversion to Catholicism and his admission into the Jesuit order interacted with a new, far-reaching, and intensive view of nature which widened the limited horizon of his early poetry and led him to a lyrical imitation of Christ's Incarnation, the 'terrible' sonnets announce--but do not represent--Hopkins' accomplishment of the everlasting yes, i.e. his willing, self-sacrificing acceptance of death; thus they intimate--but do not imitate--the subsequent admission into the circle of the blessed who succeeded in saving their souls by emulating Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection. To put it briefly, Oxford precedes the incarnation of the self in Wales, Dublin 'foreruns' the

redemption of the self in the afterworld.

Yet if we consider the issues of the poet's conversion and of his death from the angle of their poetic concern, a main difference between the poems written in Oxford and the ones composed in Dublin becomes manifest; it is true that the self-chosen poetic silence is a consequence of both Oxford and Dublin: the clearing of the senses and the spiritual purity as they are propagated by the early "Habit of Perfection" as well as the spiritual chaos described by "Nondum", are signs that the persona had entered a world of unreal imagination which supports speculations and entertains desires about future spiritual fulfilment. This non-reference of poetry to the actual moment emphasizes its non-existence, which, in turn, entirely devalues the literary work of art and eventually occasions its sacrifice due to its imperfection and inadequacy.¹² Much later, the 'sonnets of desolation' reveal a similar, imaginative world in which fantasy and nightmare prevail and the objective world virtually vanishes: "O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall / Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed" ("No worst, there is none", Poems, 100). Such dark and oracular images of grotesque deformity and primitive shapelessness are bound to provoke a renewed sacrifice of artistic creation because poetic inspiration itself (which always interacts with religious inspiration in Hopkins) does not seek the correspondence between man and God in actual present revelation any longer, but obtains its force from a happier hereafter:

¹² See chapter 3, pp. 35-7

The sigh of correspondence links the present, with the imperfect or faulty pitch of will, to the future with its uprighter and more perfect one: it begins to link it, is the first infinitesimal link in the chain or step on that road which is to created power impassable. For this reason and from this point of view it may be called a forestall of the act to follow. For in so far as it passes into the act to follow it is not the forestalling but the stalling or lodging of that act. And even the sigh or aspiration itself is in answer to an inspiration of God's spirit and is followed by the continuance and expiration of that same breath which lifts it, through the gulf and void between pitch and pitch of being, to do or be what God wishes his creature to do or be (Sermons, 156).

Hopkins' suppression of his poetic drive after his conversion, however, represented only a temporary influence that was to be followed by an outburst of fresh lyrical zeal.¹³ Unlike in "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" or "Spring and Fall", the end of the daily or the seasonal cycle in the Oxford poetry is not a symbol of the end of man's journey towards his own grave; for--although "there is no force in sap or blood" and although the breaking chestnut bud and the last fruit "Loose on the stem" are out of season--the poet is "minded to take pipe in hand / And yield a song to the decaying year;" Consequently even the autumnal atmosphere gives rise to poetic inspiration because it brings forth the fruit of song which, harvested in the fall, preserves the summer light of life within itself over the cold and dry winter.

Now I am minded to take pipe in hand
And yield a song to the decaying year;
Now while the full-leaved hursts unalter'd stand,
And scarcely does appear
The Autumn yellow feather in the boughs
While there is neither sun nor rain;

¹³ See chapter 3, pp. 37-44

And a grey heaven does the hush'd earth house,
And bluer grey the flocks of trees look in the plain.
So late the hoar green chestnut breaks a bud,
And feeds new leaves upon the winds of Fall;
So late there is no force in sap or blood;
The fruit against the wall
Loose on the stem has done its summering;
These should have starv'd with the green broods of spring,
Or never been at all;
Too late or else much, much too soon,
Who first knew moonlight by the hunters' moon.

(Poems, 148-9)

Obviously there does not yet exist any correspondence between the fall of nature, the death of man and the disappearance of song: sterility in nature evokes poetic fertility, which, in turn, proclaims and leads over to the return of spring and, for this reason, promises the restitution of a new harmony between natural creation and lyrical creativity on earth, a harmony which will additionally reconcile religious and poetical energies (first great synthesis).

He hath abolished the old drouth,
And rivers run where all was dry,
The field is sopp'd with merciful dew.
He hath put a new song in my mouth,
The words are old, the purport new,
And taught my lips to quote this word
That I shall live, I shall not die,
But I shall when the shocks are stored
See the salvation of the Lord.
We meet together, you and I,
Meet in one acre of one land,
And I will turn my looks to you,
And you shall meet me with reply
We shall be sheaved with one band
In harvest and in garnering,
When heavenly vales so thick shall stand
With corn that they shall laugh and sing.

(Poems, 18-9, emphasis mine)

Hopkins' late verse, by contrast, sets forth the impossibility to express lyrically the (future) realization of Christ's model of perfection (to be executed by the second great synthesis). Even nature's restored fecundity which used to re-

vive the poet's creativity in St. Beuno, now represents a much weaker inspiration to be expressed by verse and does not sow the seeds of an incarnational-poetic achievement anymore: fertility in nature evokes poetic sterility.¹⁴ This whole development demonstrates that time changes temporary muteness (after Oxford) into perennial silence (after Dublin).¹⁵

See, banks and brakes
Now, leaved how thick! laced they are again
With fretty chervil, look, and fresh wind shakes
Them; birds build--but not I build; no, but strain,
Time's eunuch, and not breed one work that wakes.
Mine, O thou lord of life, send my roots rain.

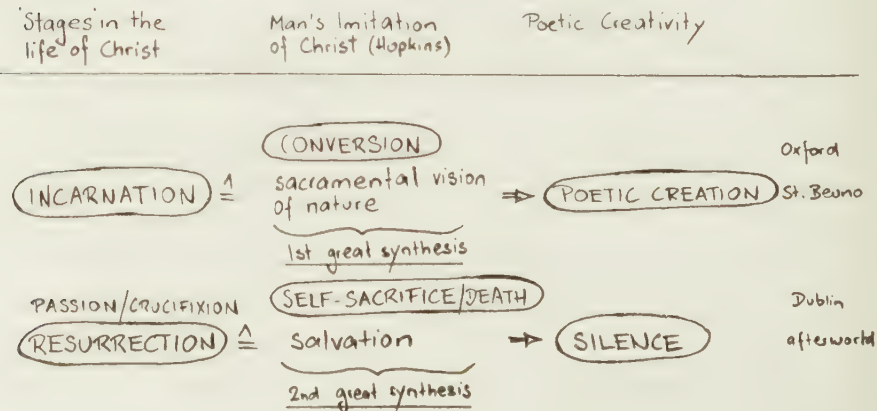
"Thou art indeed just, Lord" (Poems, 107)

- 14 The poetry of George Herbert reveals a similar conflict between fertility in nature and sterility in art:

All things are busie; onely I
Neither bring hony with the bees,
Nor flowres to make that, nor the husbandrie
To water these.

"Employment" (Herbert, 57)

- 15 Diagram 1: Hopkins' Imitatio Christi in the light of the poet's creation might be sketched as follows:



Hopkins' apprehension of time is revealing indeed:

Time has 3 dimensions and one positive pitch or direction. It is therefore not so much like any river or any sea as like the Sea of Galilee, which has the Jordan running through it and giving a current to the whole (Sermons, 196).

It is not surprising that this passage on the steady "positive pitch or direction" of time stands at the beginning of Hopkins' treatise on "Creation and Redemption / The Great Sacrifice" which he recorded during the long retreat of November 1881; for the conviction that self-sacrifice (of man and poet) is an imperative concomitant of personal redemption and salvation is both incredible and inconceivable without the idea of a temporal development. Consciousness of flux constitutes man's (and the poet's) growth from the timeless actuality of sacramental vision to the renewed everlastingness of sacrificial performance: the spiritual progress between the first great synthesis and the second great synthesis presupposes a Hegelian progress in time.¹⁶

This attitude fits neatly into Hopkins' different treatment of the water image. On the one hand, the poet uses current water in a traditional sense as a metaphor of flying time: "But it rides time like riding a river" (The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanza 6, Poems, 53).¹⁷ On the other hand, the

¹⁶ Cf. also chapter 6, pp. 155-6, footnote 10

¹⁷ Cf. also:

O I admire and sorrow! The heart's eye grieves
Discovering you, dark trampers, tyrant years.

[...]

The fine, the fingering beams

stability of the waters in an ever replenished pool stands for God's grace of poetic inspiration which has come down from the heavens: "O thou lord of life, send my roots rain", Hopkins exclaims when he desperately waits for an inspiration to move him ("Thou art indeed just, Lord", Poems, 107). But this immobility of the 'liquid of creativity' is illusive; for water always discloses a propensity for moving, that is to say, for taking on the temporally progressive character of a fast-flowing river:

I steady as a water in a well, to a poise, to a pane,
But roped with, always, all the way down from the tall
Fells or flanks of the veil, a vein
Of the gospel proffer, a pressure, a principle, Christ's gift.

The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanza 4 (Poems, 52)

To put it differently, as soon as the calm water of lyrical inspiration succumbs to the drift of current water's ravages of time, poetic creativity rapidly flows towards its own annihilation. This is why Hopkins' early preference for stagnant water ("Penmaen Pool", 1876, Poems, 64-5) turns into repeated descriptions of flowing waters ("Inversnaid, 1881, ibid., 89, "Epithalamion", 1888, ibid., 197-9).

This chronological change from poetic creation to poetic silence along with the unfolding of the poet's personality throws additional light on the difference between the "yes" Hopkins uttered at the beginning of The Wreck of the Deutschland and the apparently analogous (everlasting) "yes" he sets forth in part II of the Deutschland

Their young delightful hour do feature down
That fledged else like day-dissolved dreams
Or ringlet-race on burling Barrow brown.

"On the Portrait of Two Beautiful Young People" (Poems, 196)

and also in his second shipwreck poem, "The Loss of the Eurydice". Whereas Hopkins manages to be present in the first part of the Deutschland as an experiencing consciousness, he is still far from identifying physically with the sacrifice of the doomed characters on the two vessels.¹⁸ Hopkins' personal struggle in part I of the Deutschland in which he overcomes his first spiritual crisis through simple affirmation and rational acceptance of God's wrath is however and above all an ode on his conversion to the Catholic faith.

I did say yes
O at lightning and lashed rod;
Thou heardst me truer than tongue confess
Thy terror, O Christ, O God;
Thou knowest the walls, altar and hour and night:
The swoon of a heart that the sweep and the hurl of thee
trod
Hard down with a horror of height:
And the midriff astrain with leaning of, laced with fire of stress.
The frown of his face
Before me, the hurtle of hell
Behind, where, where was a, where was a place?
I whirled out wings that spell
And fled with a fling of the heart to the heart of the Host.
My heart, but you were doveswinged, I can tell,
Carrier-witted, I am bold to boast,
To flash from the flame to the flame then, tower from the grace
to the grace.
The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanzas 2, 3 (Poems, 52)

In contrast to the above-mentioned spatial antagonism between the lyrical I and the wrecks' protagonists, the temporal opposition between the (past) realization of the speaker's religious desire ("I did say yes") and its poetic recapitulation at the actual moment of creation is reconciled by the poet's continuing confession of creed:

¹⁸ This opposition has been amply dealt with in the previous section (pp. 174-7).

I kiss my hand
To the stars, lovely-asunder
Starlight, wafting him out of it; and
Glow, glory in thunder;
Kiss my hand to the dappled-with-damson west:

The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanza 5 (Poems, 53)

Since it is this perseverance of assent which extends Hopkins' experience of his past conversion to permanent insight and timeless cognition, his affirmative utterance "I did say yes" lays the first stone of the building of the equally timeless, permanent, i.e. incarnational poetry that he composed at St. Beuno's college in Wales. Hopkins' first yes of conversion is not only an overwhelming realization of the cosmic Christ's participating in his being but also an outstanding affirmation of the poet's creative impulse which derives its power from a similar, intense touching of self and things and sets out to imitate the Incarnated Christ's union of contrasts.

The "yes" occurring in part II of the Deutschland and in the "Eurydice", by contrast, is the everlasting acquiescence I have closely analyzed in the preceding chapter;¹⁹ it is the seven nuns' and Marcus Hare's active submission which "At downright 'No or Yes?' / Doffs all, drives full for righteousness" ("The Loss of the Eurydice", Poems, 74). The everlasting yes of salvation, in other words, means self-sacrifice and death and therefore brings about the gradual disappearance of the written text. Although both the evolution towards religious conversion and towards sacrificial death involve spiritual and physical strife, their bearing on the poet's output is completely different: conversion provokes lyrics of incarnation (after a period of momentary,

¹⁹ Cf. chapter 6, pp. 161-7

self-inflicted silence); death implies the stillness and peace of salvation.

The two parts of The Wreck of the Deutschland are therefore thematically as apart from each other as the "Eurydice" is from Hopkins' first great ode, which is much more than critics--misled by the similarity of the imagery--used to point out; Hopkins' poetic outbreak after the long silence between 1868 and 1875 anticipates various antagonisms which haunted him until the end of his life. When he was "touched afresh" by the 'terrible' sonnets' struggle with God.²⁰ Actually the Deutschland is full of contrasts generally opposing reality and desire: Hopkins' successful self-incarnation through his reception into the Catholic church in the beginning contrasts with his wishful conclusion that the world's welfare and salvation depend upon everybody's conversion:

With an anvil-ding
And with fire in him forge thy will
Or rather, rather then, stealing as Spring
Through him, melt him but master him still:
Whether at once, as once at a crash Paul,
Or as Austin, a lingering-out sweet skill,
Make mercy in all of us, out of us all
Mastery, but be adored, but be adored King.

The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanza 10 (Poems, 54)

Then the nuns' actual experience of redemption stands in stark opposition to the persona's lasting ambition to overcome his own remoteness from this final grace:

²⁰ Cf.

Thou hast bound bones and veins in me, fastened me flesh,
And after it almost unmade, what with dread,
Thy doing: and dost thou touch me afresh?

The Wreck of the Deutschland,
stanza 1 (Poems, 51)

Away in the loveable west,
On a pastoral forehead of Wales,
I was under a roof here, I was at rest,
And they the prey of the gales;

The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanza 24 (Poems, 59)

These two explicit contrasts imply the diversity between the actuality of personal conversion and the longing for personal redemption, and, in turn, disclose the discrepancy between the reality of some people's salvation and the inexistence of general, genuine faith:

Well, she has thee for the pain, for the
Patience; but pity of the rest of them!
Heart, go and bleed at a bitterer vein for the
Comfortless unconfessed of them--
No not uncomforted: lovely-felicitous Providence
Finger of a tender of, O of a feathery delicacy, the breast of the
Maiden could obey so, be a bell to, ring of it, and
Startle the poor sheep back! is the shipwreck then a harvest,
does tempest carry the grain of thee?

[...]

Dame, at our door
Drowned, and among our shoals,
Remember us in the roads, the heaven-haven of the
reward:
Our King back, Oh, upon English souls!
Let him easter in us, be a dayspring to the dimness of us,
be a crimson-cresseted east,
More brightening her, rare-dear Britain, as his reign rolls,
Pride, rose, prince, hero of us, high-priest,
Our hearts' charity's hearth's fire; our thoughts' chivalry's
throne's Lord.

The Wreck of the Deutschland,
stanzas 31, 35 (Poems, 61, 63)

Only in an over-all view of Hopkins' development as poet and priest does this system of oppositions become manifest and comprehensible. It is due to this almost prophetic quality of the Deutschland that it is much more appropriate to follow Robert Bridges' advice to attack Hopkins' most famous poem "in the rear": in the notes to the first edition of Hopkins' poetry Bridges compares The Wreck of the Deutschland to a "great dragon folded in the gate to forbid all en-

trance."²¹ Bridges was condemned for having intentionally deterred a lot of readers from the poem. Yet the Poet Laureate might not have been that wrong: although the dragon does not forbid all entrance to the realm of Hopkins' poetical work and mind, it overwhelms the occasional and unprepared adventurer by the power of its condensed thought and unconventional style; its thematic richness forms a concise, elliptical, anticipatory summary of Hopkins' entire thinking as well as it contains much of his spiritual engagement. A reading of the Deutschland is therefore a simultaneous analysis of virtually the whole of Hopkins' poetry; for it raises issues concerning the incarnational fusion of permanence and transitoriness with its implications for the poet's creativity and, at the same time, foreshadows his late poetry's motion towards closure.

What relates "The Loss of the Eurydice" to The Wreck of the Deutschland --in spite of their stylistic variances elucidated earlier²²--is not only their common location at the beginning of a new creative period (before and after St. Beuno) but also the idea that the sinking ship is a symbol of sinfulness and mortality (death-in-life) as well as of permanence and salvation (life-in-death).²³

²¹ Gerard Manley Hopkins, op. cit., 106

²² Cf. chapter 6, pp. 148-9

²³ "The Loss of the Eurydice", just like The Wreck of the Deutschland, embraces Hopkins' literary and religious evolution from the visionary resurrection of paradisaical happiness when "The marvellous Milk was Walsingham Way" (Poems, 75), over man's inborn antithesis of "My ... / Fast foundering own generation" (ibid.) to the final ordeal in the "deathgush brown" and the "rivelling snowstorm" (ibid., 74), which gives rise to eternal salvation in active submission or corresponding prayer:

Considering the generally acknowledged parallelism of sea-voyage and human life, water, by analogy with time, clearly displays two opposite qualities in Hopkins' shipwreck poems: first, it stands for the Heraclitean fluid, "the widow-making unchilding unfathering deeps" which drowns and kills every living being. This association (which never occurs in the Bible) recalls the archetypal quest of the sea-voyage when man's setting out for unknown horizons eventually becomes the ultimate spiritual adventure of his passage to death.²⁴ Second,

But to Christ lord of thunder
Crouch; lay knee by earth low under:
'Holiest, loveliest, bravest,
Save my hero, O Hero savest.

[...]

But for souls sunk in seeming
Fresh, till doomfire burn all,
Prayer shall fetch pity eternal.

"The Loss of the Eurydice" (Poems, 76)

- 24 Tennyson's "Ulysses" serves as an excellent case in point: just as the 'Deutschland' struck "the combs of a smother of sand" in the dark (stanza 14, Poems, 56), the oncoming night forms the setting of "Ulysses'" obviously last journey:

The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks;
The long day wanes; the slow moon climbs; the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends.
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.

(Tennyson, 89)

Since every mythological hero normally starts his trip at dawn, the journey at night gets an unusual, not to say weird, aspect. In the dark there is no visible or concrete object, only a "newer world" "beyond sunset"; thus the goal of the Deutschland's journey takes on the similar form of a previously unknown but presently fatal surprise: "American-outward-bound, / ... O Father, not under thy feathers nor ever as guessing / The goal was a shoal" (The Wreck of the Deutschland , stanza 12, Poems, 55).

the sea can be symbolic of life and the very generation of life. It contains the water of grace which is the most Christic of all elements because it refers to the water of eternal life from within Jesus: "But one of the soldiers stabbed his side with a lance, and at once there was a flow of blood and water" (John, 19/34). Thus the "wild waters" of disaster on the sea are transformed into "his fall-gold mercies" by an ultimate act of divine alchemy; and the nuns' union with this kind of 'eschatological' fluid turns out to be sexual consummation by means of a new baptism:²⁵

Joy fall to thee, father Francis,
Drawn to the Life that died;
With the gnarls of the nails in thee, niche of the lance,
his
Lovescape crucified
And seal of his seraph-arrival! and these thy daughters
And five-lived and leaved favour and pride,
Are sisterly sealed in wild waters,
To bathe in his fall-gold mercies, to breathe in his all-fire
glances.

The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanza 23 (Poems, 59)

Apparently enclosure by water, fulfilled love in terms of man's union with Christ, and death go hand in hand. Yet only The Wreck of the Deutschland reveals this system of entangled, intricate interrelations in their physical and spiritual fullness. Hopkins' late fragment "Epithalamion", for instance, specifically presents natural water as image for marriage and spousal love (Poems. 197-9): and the early, rather mediocre

²⁵ Hopkins' use of sexual imagery for the union of a human being with Christ is neither homosexual nor heterosexual as some scholars thought it necessary to prove. The feeling of love towards Christ which is to be consummated in final and complete identification equally affects women (the nuns) and men (Hopkins himself): fulfilment is the sexless (in terms of the male/female relation), but not asexual or unsubstantial (in terms of intensity) unification of contrasts.

"The Queen's Crowning" simply stresses the fact that death alone might lie at the root of supreme sexual fulfilment:²⁶

He gave her kisses cold as ice;
Down upon ground fell she.
She has gone with him to Paradise.
There shall her crowning be.

(Poems, 157)

Consequently the yearning for the grace of water from the heavens as Hopkins expresses it in poems 69 and '74 not only represents the poet's desperate cry for an inspiration but also hints at the speaker's growing apprehension of the final truth, bears witness to his wish for the redeeming baptism of death: "O thou lord of life, send my roots rain" ("Thou art indeed just, Lord", Poems, 107).

"And the word of it Sacrificed":

The Text between Incarnational Creation and Redeeming Non-Creation

It has been previously maintained that Hopkins' first "yes" of conversion provoked a lyrical, incarnational response which stood for Christ's first sacrifice of taking on human nature and annihilating himself on earth. The poet's growing sense of death and closure, however, was to climax in the second "yes" of poetic silence which crowns the priest's permanent striving for perfection by imitating Christ's second sacrifice of passion and death on the cross. The following final sections are thought to shed some light on how Hopkins' last

²⁶ This attitude probably originates in the Renaissance meaning of 'dying' as experiencing a sexual climax.

poems set forth this supreme 'sense of an ending'; not only with regard to their imagery or the poet's own life, but also with a view to their auditory self-reference, that is to say, their reflection upon their own development from text-incarnation to linguistic non-being, i.e. Hopkins' abandonment of his poetic career.

Just as Hopkins' loss of his visionary capacity, that is to say, his shattering doubts about supernatural vitality within the dark of nature's dissolved piedness had led to a state of spiritual aridity and forsakenness, his crisis of perception along with his general physical weakness were bound to thwart the poet's lyrical embodiment of his sacramental insight; artistic creation is doomed to perish if it cannot mediate between finite earth and infinite heaven any longer. The reason for this failure is the former's disintegration into formlessness and the latter's subsequent vanishing from the persona's consciousness: again the aesthetic and ethical dimensions of Hopkins' "inscaping" vision and creation are interdependent. The gradual frustration of Hopkins' creative instincts makes itself felt in numerous hints at circumstances that prevent him from writing something enduring:

Liverpool is of all places the most museless. It is indeed a most unhappy and miserable spot. There is moreover no time for writing anything serious-- I should say for composing it, for if it were made it might be written (Correspondence with Dixon, 42).

This kind of discouragement becomes even more apparent in Hopkins' eunuch image: all the poet can utter in his impotency is the 'terrible' sonnets, i.e. cries of desolation which, as echoes, are bound to die away in the distance and become unsubstantial, mute, and useless notes to an absent

third person addressee: "And my lament / Is cries countless,
cries like dead letters sent / To dearest him that lives
alas! away" ("I wake and feel the fell of dark", Poems, 101).
Literary fertility is staunch by all authorities, speech
and auditory receptivity stopped in every respect: both heav-
en and hell operate as negative powers obstructing, neglect-
ing and even undoing Hopkins' best works; this isolation
turns the speaker into the solitary searcher of a new way
to personal salvation: "Only what word / Wisest my heart
breeds dark heaven's baffling ban / Bars or hell's spell
thwarts. This to hoard unheard, / Heard unheeded, leaves
me a lonely began" ("To seem the stranger lies my lot", Poems,
101). The speaker is hardly able to conceive of what this
new way towards his own redemption and sanctity will imply;
he only realizes that he has made a desperate and painful
first step.

Another sonnet distinctly mentions what my arguments repeat-
edly strove to suggest: the new way of the second great syn-
thesis has to do without art, that is to say, it has to get
away from the incarnational text as the perfect imitation
of Christ; the poet shall sing in pain and despair one last
time before he becomes calm, grows dumb and has to leave the
stage of poetic creativity forever; only then will the or-
deal of the final struggle have its purging and redeeming
effect.

My cries heave, herds-long; huddle in a main, a chief-
woe, world-sorrow; on an age-old anvil wince and sing--
Then lull, then leave off. Fury had shrieked 'No ling-
ering! Let me be fell: force I must be brief'.

"No worst, there is none" (Poems, 100)

Thus the 'sonnets of desolation' bear witness to the poet's --but not the man's--sad and devastating failure to achieve Ignatian colloquy intended as a sign of the soul's final tranquility. The speaker's expression of absolute horror of confrontation "me frantic to avoid thee and flee" (Car-rion Comfort", Poems, 99).and of God's corresponding aversion to colloquy in so far as the persona's direct or indirect verbal addresses to the Lord remain all unrequited, indicates the incapacity of the poetic text itself to bring about the communication with Christ, but does not prevent the reconciliation of man and divinity in physical conflict.²⁷ If it were not for this first step of everlasting self-sacrifice, the discrepancy between Hopkins' outward mimetic activities (of which poetic creation represented the most prominent and distinguished feature) and the inward realization of Imitatio would be converted into an unbridgeable gap:

I do not feel then that outwardly I do much good, much that I care to do or can much wish to prosper; and this is a mournful life to lead. In thought I can of course divide the good from the evil and live for the one, not the other: this justifies me but it does not alter the facts. Yet it seems to me that I could lead this life well enough if I had bodily energy and cheerful spirits. However these God will not give me. The other part, the more important, remains, my inward service (Sermons, 262).²⁸

Hopkins growing propensity for discarding his literary ambitions becomes also manifest by an ever more explicit incorporation into his texts of the imitative features which had already caused the stylistic shift from predominant idiosyn-

²⁷ Cf. pp. 182-3

²⁸ Cf. also Correspondence with Dixon, 88: "I have never wavered in my vocation, but I have not lived up to it."

crazy and originality to prevailing echo and imitation.²⁹ The quest for spiritual comfort replaces the pursuit of literary adventure, but this change is purchased at the expense of the poet's creative strength. Therefore the 'terrible' sonnets reveal a stylistic revision which is even more salient than the one detected in the verse Hopkins composed right after having left St. Beuno. Taut severity of style, austere economy of technique and evident simplicity of structure reach their extreme limit: the syntax of the poems and fragments written at the end of Hopkins' career is less tortured, their rhythm easier and hardly out of the ordinary; moreover the tightness of their diction is far from showing the descriptive elaboration of his 'baroque' poems. There are scarcely any specifying adjectives, images, metaphors or other conceivable signs of lyrical sensuousness.

Thee, God, I come from, to thee go,
All day long I like fountain flow
From thy hand out, swayed about
Mote-like in thy mighty glow.

What I know of thee I bless,
As acknowledging thy stress
On my being and as seeing
Something of thy holiness.

Once I turned from thee and hid,
Bound on what thou hadst forbid;
Sow the wind I would; I sinned:
I repent of what I did.

Bad I am, but yet thy child.
Father, be thou reconciled.
Spare thou me, since I see
With thy might that thou art mild.

I have life left with me still
And thy purpose to fulfil;
Yea a debt to pay thee yet:
Help me, sir, and so I will.

²⁹ Cf. chapter 6, pp. 148-53

But thou bidst, and just thou art,
Me shew mercy from my heart
Towards my brother, every other
Man my mate and counterpart.

(Poems, 194)

The rhythm of these weak lines flowseasily without the difficulty of poetic experiment; their corresponding plain allusion to the close of creative inspiration revealingly matches a smooth image of individual, temporal evanescence: "I like fountain flow". Furthermore, obsessively monotonous word-for-word repetitions make degenerate a chorus to a dull and wearying echo:

What shall I do for the land that bred me,
Her homes and fields that folded and fed me?
Be under her banner and live for her honour:
Under her banner I'll live for her honour.
Chorus. Under her banner we live for her honour.

[...]

Call me England's fame's fond lover,
Her fame to keep, her fame to recover.
Spend me or end me what God shall send me,
But under her banner I live for her honour.
Ch. Under her banner we march for her honour.

[...]

(Poems, 195)

The poet still makes attempts at stylistic features of originality such as alliteration: "Her homes and fields that folded and fed me? He still uses internal rhymes: "Spend me or end me what God shall send me". But these usages are nothing but a poor copy of earlier devices which reconciled a semantic paradox by means of their likeness of sound: "All felled, felled, are all felled; / Of a fresh and following folded rank / Not spared, not one" [...] "Where we, even where we mean / To mend her we end her" ("Binsey Poplars", Poems, 78-9). Alliteration and internal rhyme manage to connect the antonyms of "felled" and "folded" and of "mend" and "end"

respectively; thereby they enlarge the semantic system of the line. A couple of years later, by contrast, the same artifices solely confirm the obvious semantic similitude of "folded" and "fed" and of "spend" and "end".³⁰

It is not surprising that the analogy between Hopkins' Oxford verse and his Dublin poetry continues as far as the imitative character of his compositions is concerned. Yet, whereas Hopkins' last poems are frankly imitative in so far as they assemble an extensive amount of what I called figures of pure imitation, his earliest lyrics are imitative in the fullest sense of the word because they particularly tend to be modelled after older patterns. James Milroy rightly declares that "in these very early poems, therefore, the language game is being played within rules which apply, not to the language as a whole, or to verse as a whole, but to the grammar and lexicon of the poetic canon."³¹ "Heaven-Haven's" prophecy with regard to style and content is the only exception in a miscellany that becomes almost counterfeit:³² various simple forms and well-known rhythms are tentatively applied to cover the whole range of definite lyrical composition beginning with a psychologically dramatic answer to Mrs Rossetti's "Convent Threshold" ("A Voice from the World", Poems, 120) leading over to a ballad-like "Continuation of R. Garnett's 'Nix'" (ibid., 120) and ending in an imitation

³⁰ Cf. chapter 5, pp. 98-100 and chapter 6, p. 148

³¹ James Milroy, op. cit., 109

³² Cf. chapter 3, pp. 40-4

of Milton's "Il Penseroso" ("Il Mystico", ibid., 111-5). Hopkins strained this kind of mimesis to the limit when he inserted a quotation from Tennyson's "A Dream of Fair Woman" in his incomplete sonnet "To Oxford":

As Devonshire letters, earlier in the year
Than we in the East dare look for buds, disclose
Smells that are sweeter-memored than the rose,
And pressed violets in the folds appear,
So is it with my friends, I note, to hear
News from Belleisle, even such a sweetness blows
(I know it, knowing not) across from those
Meadows to them inexplicably dear.
'As when a soul laments, which hath been blest'--
I'll cite no further what the initiate know.
I never saw those fields whereon their best
And undivulged love does overflow.

(Poems, 162)

It has already been argued that both kinds of linguistic imitation entail the poet's devaluation of his own work. We have also seen that this attitude has different effects: after his conversion, Hopkins' poetic inspiration manifests itself in The Wreck of the Deutschland's outburst of regained poetic power and particular stylistic originality;³³ Hopkins' spiritual askesis in Dublin, by contrast, finally and definitely comes to comprehend poetic creation itself on the grounds of its alignment with a trend towards a distinctive style of likeness and imitation.

Hopkins' ultimate return to conventional, predominantly mimetic forms calls attention to the fact that imitation--although indispensable in the course of the creative process--is also counter-productive, above all in terms of 'pure' repetition and dreary echo: extensive imitation implies the li-

³³ Cf. p. 190

mitation and oppression of creativity, and, at its worst, disturbs poetry's union of contrasts, i.e. throws off Hopkins' perfect balance between tradition and experiment, between oldness and newness, between likeness and difference. Writing therefore turns out to be a double-edged activity: it gets the poet to the stage of St. Beuno's linguistic Imitatio Christi; but it can also be transformed into something stale, flat, and unprofitable which, in the long run, keeps the poet away from creating at all and inhibits a renewed poetic imitation of Christ. Thus a statement about Hopkins' poetry could be brought into a new and extremely condensed form: he writes with the aim of religious imitation and is forced to abandon poetic composition again because of exorbitant stylistic imitation.

This development from a poetry that imitates to an imitative poetry that is about to change into the muteness of non-poetry is however not a linear and smooth passage from one extreme attitude to another. Even at the end of his life the idea of a self-incarnational poetry does not lose its attractiveness for Hopkins: "Tom's Garland", "Harry Ploughman" or "Epithalamion" represent outbursts of elaborate vocabulary, expressive syntax, and rhythmic license which oppose the controlling pressure from within which is so characteristic of the atmosphere in the 'sonnets of desolation':³⁴

³⁴ "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the comfort of the Resurrection" (Poems, 105-6) would also belong to this group of poems; since this poem exemplifies the particular stage of linguistically realized prophecy, it will occupy a prominent place in the concluding section.'

relapse into disintegrating imitation opposes an occasional renaissance of blossoming originality (in form and content), and the expression of pretended poetic sterility ironically contrasts with the palpable formation, positive actuality and evident existence of the poem. These contradictions bring in view an artistic identity which is torn between creation and non-creation: on the one hand, Hopkins consciously believes into the necessity of a poetic achievement in order to bring about Christ's union of transitoriness and transcendence in nature; this attitude clings to earthly life. On the other hand, the growing awareness that poetic self-incarnation will come to nothing without the climax of self-sacrifice corroborates the speaker's inclination towards death and the life after it.³⁵

Thus in Dublin, the poet experiences a paradoxical situation that puts him on one level with Christ: the desperate longing for an inspiration ("I want the one rapture of an inspiration", "To R.B.", Poems, 108) and the simultaneous, unconscious reluctance to take advantage of a sudden and unhopedor poetic flash ("Four of these [sonnets] came like inspirations unbidden and against my will", Letters to Bridges, 221) parallels Christ's final conflict on the Mount of Olives in which He struggles against defeat before finally yielding in resignation to the evil event: Christ wavers between the

³⁵ Revealingly enough, there are transitional stages: Hopkins' desire to create begins to put up with the idea of the product's future deterioration. Thus muteness gradually invades the creative consciousness: "So with me, if I could but get on, if I could but produce work I should not mind its being buried, silenced, and going no further; but it kills me to be time's eunuch and never to beget (Letters to Bridges, 222)."

wish to be spared the test ("Father if it be thy will, take this cup away from me", Luke, 22/42) and the heroic acceptance of death ("Jesus, knowing all that was coming upon him, went out to them [the soldiers] and asked, 'Who is it you want?', John, 18/3, emphasis mine). The poet's last doubt whether to choose creation or non-creation repeats Christ's very final hesitation between life and death.

Since Christ was unswervingly resolved to overcome this conflict and to go the way of passion to the fatal end, Hopkins comes to the marked conclusion that the imitation of Christ irrevocably hinges upon poetical stillness or non-creation. The figure of the unproductive eunuch proves to be a brave and glorious martyr:

All impulse fails me: I can give myself no sufficient reason for going on. Nothing comes: I am a eunuch--but it is for the kingdom of heaven's sake (Letters to Bridges, 270).

Of course such an attitude of submissive loyalty, often accompanied by physical and spiritual dejection, belongs to general Jesuit askesis:

Altogether perhaps my heart has never been so burdened and cast down as this year. The tax on my strength has been greater than I have felt before: at least now at Teignmouth I feel myself weak and can do little. But in all this our Lord goes His own way (Journals, 249-50).³⁶

Yet it is striking to note Hopkins' emphasising the beneficial effect of literary temperance during his years at the Royal University of Ireland:

³⁶ Cf. also the following passage from a letter to his friend Baillie which refers to Hopkins' life in Stonyhurst: "This life here though it is hard is God's will for me as I most intimately know, which is more than violets knee-deep" (Further Letters, 235).

And in the life I lead now, which is one of a continually jaded and harassed mind, if in any leisure I try to do anything I make no way--nor with my work, alas! but so it must be (Letters to Bridges, 221).

For this reason, only the definite disappearance of poetry-"inscapes" entails the salvation of the soul; the sacrifice of the Word implies the immolation of the word:

Five! the finding and sake
And cipher of suffering Christ.
Mark, the mark is of man's make
And the word of it Sacrificed.

The Wreck of the Deutschland
stanza 22 (Poems, 58)

Death as the Paradox of Completion: Poetry and Prophecy

A detailed interpretation of "To R.B." is liable to point out this poem's precarious location on the thin line separating creation from non-creation.

"To R. B."

The fine delight that fathers thought; the strong
Spur, live and lancing like the blowpipe flame,
Breathes once and, quenched faster than it came,
Leaves yet the mind a mother of immortal song.

Nine months she then, nay years, nine years she long
Within her wears, bears, cares and combs the same:
The widow of an insight lost she lives, with aim
Now known and hand at work now never wrong.

Sweet fire the sire of muse, my soul needs this;
I want the one rapture of an inspiration.
O then if in my lagging lines you miss

The roll, the rise, the carol, the creation,
My winter world, that scarcely breathes that bliss
Now, yields you, with some sighs, our explanation.

(Poems, 108)

This poem analyzes the process of lyrical genesis in general and, at the same time, it announces the end of the

poet's activity.³⁷ This conflict between origin and closing of poetic creation is driven to a point of paradox where the speaker's sorrow about his own sterility in the sestet not only opposes the imagery of sexual gestation in the octet, but also palpably collides with the successful accomplishment of the "lagging lines" themselves. If we consider the whole of "To R.B." as one self-contained word, it represents an embodiment of the seventh type of Empsonian ambiguity "when the two meanings of the word, the two values of the ambiguity, are the two opposite meanings defined by the context, so that the total effect is to show a fundamental division in the writer's mind."³⁸ The two opposite meanings or values of "To R.B." are poetic creation (life) and poetic non-creation (death) between which Hopkins oscillates in his self-dividing ambition to imitate Christ.

Therefore it cannot be a coincidence that this poem which proclaims its own annihilation or non-existence is Hopkins' very last one, composed seven weeks before his death: the explicit termination of poetic creation **is** strongly associated with the imminent end of Hopkins' own existence. In a letter inducing the sonnet, Hopkins mentioned to Bridges that he was ill. Probably the typhoid fever which was to carry him off had already struck; Robert Bridges made an equivalent remark to Canon Dixon: "His [Gerard's] last letters to me and the two last poems are if not a foreboding of it, yet full of a strange fitness for

³⁷ Cf. chapter 5, pp. 106-9

³⁸ William Empson, op. cit., 191

the end."³⁹ Bridges' observation reveals Hopkins' changed inner disposition that is now prepared to share the fate of his poems' heroes and to enjoy with them the "heaven-haven of the reward" which fulfilled duty will offer (The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanza 35, Poems, 63):

Seas of tears and sighs to fill the firmament are
waste of water and loss of breath where duty is
not done. Duty is love. [...] There is nothing higher than duty in creatures of in God: God the Son's love for God the Father is duty. Only when I speak thus highly of duty I mean duty done because it is duty and not mainly from either hope or fear (Sermons, 53).

[...]

And what was to be man's reward and wages for his work done?--Eternal life, glorious peace and power and praise and satisfaction from his king and his angel companions and his own conscience, peace and the sense of life everlastingly in mind and body for the efforts made, the pains taken, the strength spent. For the natural reward of duty, as St. Paul tells us, is life--life in some shape or other, the continuance or the lengthening or the heightening of life, life here or life hereafter" (ibid., 60).

It is the whole design of Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises to achieve a union of duty and desire so that the true Christian, as integrated personality, uses all things in a way that leads him back to God through the imitation of Christ. Hopkins reaches this perfect state because his "fitness for the end" emulates both the soldier's courageous loyalty and Christ's analogous, supremely desirable awareness that complete surrender means salvation: "Immortal beauty is death with duty" ("What shall I do for the land that bred me", Poems, 195). Thus the Hopkins of "To R.B." is becoming one with Felix Randal whose spirit, reluctant to change at first, mounts at last to God while the

³⁹ Robert Bridges, The Selected Letters of Robert Bridges, ed. by Donald E. Stanford, Newark, 1983, 186

body falls apart and the flesh declines.

Sickness broke him. Impatient, he cursed at first, but mended
Being anointed and all; though a heavenlier heart began some
Months earlier, since I had our sweet reprieve and ransom
Tendered to him. Ah well, God rest him all road ever he
offended!

"Felix Randal" (Poems, 86)

In fact, Hopkins, as his body and mind deteriorate, gradually
achieves a stronger spiritual self: "Dearest Bridges, --I am
ill to-day, but no matter for that as my spirits are good"
(Letters to Bridges, 303).⁴⁰

Whereas in "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" nightly disintegration
leaves man with the final alternative of the afterworld's "right,
wrong", the destructive encroachment of death, in the end,
makes way for the speaker's growing spiritual transformation
culminating in Hopkins' reportedly last words "I am so happy,
I am so happy." Thus man's inborn antithesis, i.e. the fact
that "our make and making break, are breaking, down / To man's
last dust, drain fast towards man's first slime" eventually
gets a positive tinge: "man's first slime" unites with "earth's
past prime" ("The Sea and the Skylark", Poems, 68); nature
and humankind are reconciled by death, the "Warm-laid grave
of a womb-life grey" (The Wreck of the Deutschland, Poems,
53). Hopkins' faith, virtue and study gave him the strength
to fill his writings with allusions that death was "the goal
to win the prize which is God's call to the life above, in
Christ Jesus" (Philippians, 3/14):

⁴⁰ This quotation is the beginning of Hopkins' last letter
to his friend dating from April 29, 1889.
Cf. also: "I have been a little ill and am still a little
pulled down; however I am in good spirits (Letters to Brid-
ges, 271).

O Father, not under thy feathers nor ever as guessing
The goal was a shoal, of a fourth the doom to be drowned;
Yet did the dark side of the bay of thy blessing
Not vault them, the million of rounds of thy mercy not reeve
even them in?

The Wreck of the Deutschland,
stanza 12 (Poems, 55)

For this reason the "handy and brave" man of the Deutschland's
crew who "was pitched to his death at a blow" not only met
his death by falling from the rigging, but also reached the
absolute pitch of his being because "God, throned behind /
Death with a sovereignty that heeds but hides, bodes but a-
bides" (The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanzas 16, 32, Poems,
56, 62) granted him the grace of self-fulfilment.⁴¹

For grace is any action, activity, on God's part
by which, in creating or after creating, he carries
the creature to or towards the end of its being,
which is its self-sacrifice to God and its salvation
(Sermons, 154).

[...]

... their [the creatures'] correspondence with grace
and seconding of God's designs is like a taking part
in their own creation, the creation of their best
selves (ibid., 197).

Hopkins who fully adopts the ethic concept that the self-sac-
rifice of Christ is the fundamental principle of perfection
realizes that only such a 'great sacrifice' would yield new
being to himself and that it is only through this highest
act of religion God meant any being to come to him at all
(Sermons, 137-8).⁴²

⁴¹ Even for modern authors death preserves the aspect of well-
rounded completion: "Death is the mother of beauty; hence
from her, / Alone, shall come fulfilment to our dreams /
And our desires" (Wallace Stevens, "Sunday Morning").

⁴² Cf. Matthew 16/24-5: "Jesus then said to his disciples,

The body achieves the "inscape" of full being when it surrenders to seeming extinction; in the moment of departure from this life, man reaches the height of his imitation of Christ, descends in order to be lifted up with Him: "And the true position of things between man and God appears by an immediate light at death, when man's self is set face to face with God's (Sermons, 140).⁴³ Hopkins' sense of closure which is expressed by the external drama of events as well as by the internal drama of his own mental and emotional state favors an at first tacit but then ever more evident identification with Christ:

See how the great conquerors were cut short, Alexander, Caesar just seen. Above all Christ our Lord: his career was cut short and, whereas he would have wished to succeed by success--for it is insane to lay yourself out for failure, prudence is the first of the cardinal virtues, and he was the most prudent of men--nevertheless he was doomed to succeed by failure; his plans were baffled, his hopes dashed, and his work was done by being broken off undone. However much he understood all this he found it an intolerable grief to submit to it. He left the example (Correspondence with Dixon, 137-8).⁴⁴

'If anyone wishes to be a follower of mine, he must leave self behind; he must take up his cross and come with me. Whoever cares for his own safety is lost; but if a man will let himself be lost for my sake, he will find his true self.'" Sacrifice thereby receives its literal meaning: it makes the self holy. The attitude that "to know for certain that thou must lead a dying life" as Thomas à Kempis suggests (op. cit., 159) must have exerted a continuing influence on Hopkins: "The man who in the world is as dead to the world as if he were buried in the cloister is already a saint. But this is our ideal" (Correspondence with Dixon, 76).

⁴³ The clash of light and darkness also plays an important part in "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire".

⁴⁴ In terms of the actual political situation it is possible to establish an additional connection between Christ's sacrifice and Hopkins' death: as a member of a Catholic

The paradox that one must test one's belief to keep it and that one must lose one's identity to gain it, which is throughout all the gospels, entirely reverses the usual conception of final harmony and stability. The common topos of incompleteness, viz. dying early or dying unknown, is found to symbolize definite fulfilment:⁴⁵

When thou judgest that almost all is lost, then oftentimes it is that thou art in the way of the greatest gain of merit.⁴⁶

Hopkins' recognition that his own works remain unknown and are broken off undone not only implies his imitation of Christ's 'hidden life',⁴⁷ but also entails the raw and lonely comprehension that his poetry need not be written to any actual or fictive audience anymore. This 'obsolescence' of an audience and of literary fame, in turn, calls into question the raison d'être of the poem itself.

order in Ireland that is, along with the Catholic Church, fighting for, or at least in favor of, Home Rule, Hopkins belongs to a minority living in a generally hostile environment and under a foreign government, just as Christ had attempted to defend his faith against the predominance of all kinds of Pharisees. Self-sacrifice seems to be the only appropriate means to save people from the hopeless tangle Hopkins outlines in his letters from Ireland (cf. Letters to Bridges, 252 and Further Letters, 170).

⁴⁵ Today's mythic cult of people who are (violently) cut down in the prime of their youth is certainly rooted in this old Christian paradox.

⁴⁶ Thomas à Kempis, op. cit., 275

⁴⁷ Cf. Sermons, 176 on The Hidden Life: Erat subditus illis: the hidden life at Nazareth is the great help to faith for us who must live more or less an obscure, constrained, and unsuccessful life."

Moreover, the isolated self-enclosure of the 'terrible' sonnets becomes so radical and absolute that the objectifying distance between observer and thing seen little by little diminishes to nothing: if the self, engulfed by its own properties, becomes the target of sensory experience such as in "I wake and feel the fell of dark" (Poems, 101), the speaker loses the perceptive capacity which had distinguished sacramental vision and, as a consequence, poetic creation; the gradual loss of objectivity is encroaching upon the incarnational strength of the text because it makes the poem turn into a Whitmanesque Song of Myself which cannot maintain the precarious balance between virtue and vice and thus resembles the fallen angels' song of selfpraise:⁴⁸

This song of Lucifer's was a dwelling on his own beauty, an instressing of his own inscape, and like a performance on the organ and instrument of his own being; it was a sounding, as they say, of his own trumpet and a hymn in his own praise. Moreover it became an incantation: others were drawn in; it became a concert of voices, a concerting of selfpraise, an enchantment, a magic, by which they were dizzied, dazzled, and bewitched (Sermons, 200-1).

⁴⁸ It becomes clear now why Hopkins started his second poetic career by **first** putting down the most objective expression possible: "Thou mastering me / God!" (The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanza 1, Poems, 51). Yet it is surprising to note that such an early poem as "The Lantern out of Doors" (St. Beuno, 1877) already hints at Christ's essence revealing itself outside the realm of objective, optical vision; man's apprehension of truth, by contrast, fully depends on perception:

... wind
What most I may eye after, be in at the end
I cannot, and out of sight is out of mind.
Christ minds: Christ's interest, what to avow or amend
There, eyes them, heart wants, care haunts, foot
follows kind,
Their ransom, their rescue, and first, fast, last friend.
(Poems, 71)

The poetic text which knows about the inexpedience and the uselessness of its audience on the grounds of its attempted imitation of Christ's hidden life and which begins to undo perceptive distance as the constituting principle of its coming into being proclaims its own dissolution along with the self-sacrifice of the creative ego.⁴⁹ It becomes evident that Hopkins' images of closure, such as the fall of nature or the end of man's earthly existence, are incontestably related to Christ's passion and His second sacrifice as well as to man's attempted Imitatio Christi which includes the fading away of poetic creativity. Yet this time Hopkins' sacrifice of poetry is not confined to a simple and cheap "slaughter of the innocents" because "a very spiritual man once told me that with things like composition the best sacrifice was not to destroy one's work but to leave it entirely to be disposed of by obedience" (Correspondence with Dixon, 88). Thus Hopkins will stop to live as man and as poet with the knowledge that the time might come for his verse--just as Christ was aware of the durability of his message:

And if he [the Lord] chooses to avail himself of what I leave at his disposal he can do so with a felicity and with a success which I could never command (Correspondence with Dixon, 93).

Since the moment of self-discovery and self-realization means simultaneous self-extinction, it cannot be expressed by the creation of the poem; Hopkins' poetry which is always locked in the present instant of revelation is not capable of accomplishing the identification with Christ's sacrifice. It is

⁴⁹ The willing giving up of the poetic self would be impossible to the ordinary Romantic who could never indulge in such a destruction of the very sign of his nature and personality.

true that poetry ably succeeds in depicting God's working in man and therefore achieves an imitation of Christ's Incarnation: "Ah, touched in your bower of bone, / Are you! turned for an exquisite smart, / Have you! make words break from me here all alone, / Do you!--mother of being in me, heart" (The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanza 18, Poems, 57); but Christ's inmost essence of final, sacrificial self-emptying along with man's full imitation of this perfect, redemptive act are beyond the grasp of the poetic mind and ultimately defy any linguistic expressiveness: "Beyond saying sweet, past telling of tongue, / Thou art lightning and love, I found it, a winter and warm; / Father and fondler of heart thou hast wrung: / Hast thy dark descending and most art merciful then" (ibid., stanza 9, Poems, 54). The representation of the appearance of the Lord during the nuns' salvation passes the poet's descriptive capabilities, which manifests itself by the linguistic breakdown of a babbling, stuttering staccato of alliterative monosyllables. The poet temporarily loses control of his words and, driven by his sympathy for the dying nun, seems to drown in his own words:

But how shall I ... make me room there:
Reach me a ... Fancy, come faster--
Strike you the sight of it? look at it loom there,
Thing that she ... There then! the Master,
Ipse, the only one, Christ, King, Head:

The Wreck of the Deutschland,
stanza 28 (Poems, 60)

Whereas the Word can be expressed by means of the word,⁵⁰ the passion and the end of the Word can only be matched by an echo which fades into silence; alone the sacrifice of human

⁵⁰ Cf. chapter 5, pp. 94-5

and poetic self imitates Christ's Resurrection.

The speaker of "To R.B." who lives in a precarious "winter world" on the verge of unselving expresses his failure to utter the ineffable, not because he is struck dumb by a momentary torrent of uncontrollable words, but because he seemingly lacks poetic inspiration altogether; this poetic non-fulfilment is an unmistakable sign that words, once they are cut off from the Word, begin to lose their original power to reach out and touch things--at least in the view of the poet himself. Although the poem is shining in apparently perfect completion it cannot pronounce "The roll, the rise, the carol, the creation", that is to say, it is at a loss to represent what is connected with an acoustic or visual apprehension of Christ's rebirth and Resurrection.⁵¹ "To R.B." is nevertheless not only a poem about failure but also about success: with the end of the sonnet the persona comes as close as possible to the point of sacrifice; he almost achieves an imitation of the Deutschland's nun who "Read the unshapeable shock night / And knew the who and the why" (stanza 29, Poems, 61). The very last word of the poem explicitly discloses that the poet has found the explanation to the "who and the why", which is actually "our explanation" because it is composed from the viewpoint of "yonder"-world's oncoming union with Christ.

The only thing which separates the finally silent persona of

⁵¹ Cf. Matthew, 28/2-4 describing the circumstances of Christ's Resurrection: "Suddenly there was a violent earthquake; an angel of the Lord descended from heaven; he came to the stone and rolled it away, and sat himself down on it. His face shone like lightning; his garments were white as snow. At the sight of him the guards shook with fear and lay like dead."

"To R.B." from his own redemption is death. The speaker's silence at the end of the poem answers, just as the silent faith of "The-last-breath penitent spirits" does (The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanza 33, Poems, 62), to God's last and healing in-spiration; he expires by affirming his faith and by painfully uttering the word that is the first impulse, the abiding direction and the ultimate destination of creation and that will give rise to the persona's salvation: Christ.⁵² The direct finding of the Word/word and its uttering it "outright" as the lyrical self observed it in the Deutschland bear witness to the transformation of the incarnational text into the merely performative act of sacrifice and final silence:⁵³ when the literal and the figural function of language fuse and the wording becomes the sacrificial experience itself, then the last word has been said; linguistic action, whether written or spoken, has fulfilled its being.⁵⁴

Ah! there was a heart right!
There was single eye!
Read the unshapeable shock night

⁵² Cf. chapter 5, pp. 103-6 on inspiration

⁵³ Cf. chapter 6, pp. 166-7 on performance

⁵⁴ A passage from "A Voice from the World" vaguely anticipates the relation between the incapacity to find words and the necessity to find the word in order to find fulfilment:

Or this, or else I do not love,
I inly said; but could not move
My fast-lodged tongue. 'To her the gift
I yield' I would have cried. At last
Something I said; I swooned and fell.
The angel lifted us above.
The bitterness of death was past,
My love; and all was sweet and well.

And knew the who and the why;
Wording it how but by him that present and past,
Heaven and earth are word of, worded by?--

[...]

But here was heart-throe, birth of a brain,
Word, that heard and kept thee and uttered thee outright.

The Wreck of the Deutschland,
stanzas 29, 30 (Poems, 61)

Self-sacrifice is thus not only a creative act but, at the same time, a union of contrasts, a union of heaven and earth, strictly speaking. The fact that the tall nun "towered in the tumult" when her "virginal tongue told" the everlasting yes sets forth Resurrection's renewed conquering of the vertical distance (The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanza 17, Poems, 57). Furthermore, in death, being and not-being are united because it is through the ignominy of the cross alone that all things are drawn home to Being. Actually the cross not only visibly embodies the coming together of opposites but also symbolizes both salvation and burden: the cross as trope par excellence of the union of contrasts represents the permanent axis on which the world turns: stat crux dum volvitur orbis. The identification of the cross with Christ and the nun additionally shows that in a state of eternal bliss all oppositions are reconciled: "The cross to her she calls Christ to her" (The Wreck of the Deutschland, stanza 24, Poems, 59).

If the poet went on creating after "To R.B." his efforts would fall back on themselves because the lack of silence would put the ultimate goal of salvation out of reach. Poetic song, therefore, takes on the qualities of its rhyming epithets: it is "strong" and "long" in so far as it imitates Christ's Incarnation with regard to its connotation of the 'earthly-divine'; yet, in the end, it is "wrong"

in so far as it can never replace the 'heavenly-divine' because art is an emblem of man's finite nature. This is why men are "said" to create (Sermons, 238); for their activity only resembles that of God, the only true creator, but is not identical with His: human creation may be called such only by analogy; poetic creation however constitutes and anticipates final self-fulfilment just as Christ's Resurrection would not have happened without his Incarnation.⁵⁵

It has become evident now that the dialectical pattern of contrast and union represents the basic structure of Hopkins' sense perception, poetic expression and thought. It pervades creation in nature and in poetry, landscape and wordscape; it makes up the human self and governs man's apprehension of the divine essence. In Hopkins' universe all things take on significance in terms of their faculty to unify oppositions into one whole; natural and divine beauty display their completeness between the poles of paradox: nature is swift and slow, sweet and sour, adazzle

⁵⁵ The development from incarnational poetry to redemptive silence originates in the collapse of "inscapes" and in the increasing number of devices of echo and imitation. "The Loss of the Eurydice" may be considered the first poem in a long series of lyrics which more and more introduce decomposing elements into their form and content (cf. chapter 6, above all 148-53). In retrospect, it is rewarding to associate this poem and its mythological bearing with the poet's concluding insight on the fate of his poetry and the remedy of silence: Hopkins, who, as a Greek scholar, was certainly aware of the significance of the name 'Eurydice', becomes comparable to Orpheus, not only because he wants his poems to have the power of "bidding" (cf. chapter 5, pp. 113-4), but also because he will only find fulfilment and be reunited with his love when both life and song have come to an end. Just as even the most beautiful, and literally moving song does not bring back the beloved Eurydice from the merciless underworld (a second time), Hopkins' most outstanding verse will not lead him to salvation. For both Hopkins and Orpheus the loss of (the) Eurydice is the beginning of the end of self.

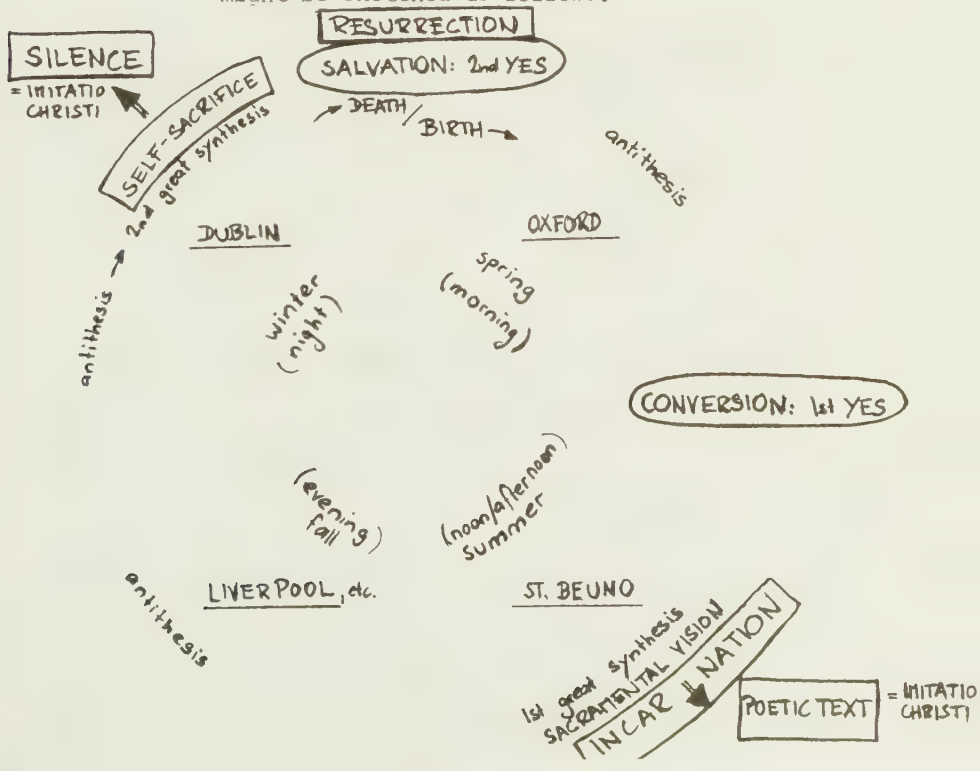
and dim; God is lightning and love; water symbolizes death (by drowning) as well as life (by baptism). Even abstract values embody the quality of the 'both ... and' model: time, patience and desolation mean war and give rise to peace; death itself links the end of one life with the beginning of the next one. Finally the character of poetry which in itself reconciles the contrasts of old and new, of imitation and originality is turned into its contrary: poetic creation does and does not imitate Christ. "Inscapes" of any kind, to put it differently, stand for a union of contrasts and, just as the essence of a natural object becomes manifest by its running through different "inscapes",⁵⁶ temporal development, seen by Hopkins as a sequence of various such "inscape"-patterns, sets forth his attitude towards life, which is one of continuous, substantial growth towards perfection and which is therefore adequately brought out by a progress from one fixed Platonic type, from one "inscape" of timeless bliss, from one ('great') Hegelian synthesis to the next (and higher) one. The recurrent motif of conflict and harmony, in other words, is the driving force behind external flux, but also behind poetic language which, for Hopkins, always refers to something outside itself, is always an expression of an impression. Yet the same motif, by envisaging the second great synthesis, is in turn responsible for the cessation of poetic creation: contrast and union create and uncreate; they are the alpha and the omega of the universe and thereby keep the world turning.

Hopkins' poetry-book completes itself by embracing the first

⁵⁶ Cf. chapter 2, pp. 17-8 and chapter 3, p. 39

great synthesis of poetic utterance and the second great synthesis of poetic silence. It thus repeats and metaphorically paraphrases important and constituting parts of the Book whose contents disclose a dialectical development in time as well: Hopkins' poetry tells and is itself the story of the Fall and its Redemption by Christ: the St. Beuno poems resurrect Paradise by glorifying and imitating Christ's Incarnation; the description of physical disintegration then announces the plight of death while the poem experiences the beginning of its own dissolution before the 'terrible' sonnets go the way of passion and doubt towards their own and the poet's annihilation in imitation of Christ's sacrifice.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Diagram 2: The dialectical development of Hopkins' poetry and its relation to the poet's imitation of Christ and to some biographical and geographical facts might be sketched as follows:



There are however a few lyrical passages in Hopkins' work which overcome the limits of the poetically utterable and of enforced silence by entering the world after death and thus expressing a truth that can only be presumed: the poet tries to set forth the final stability of the self's union with Christ in the afterworld, a state which is actually related to poetic non-existence.

For how to the heart's cheering
The down-dugged ground-hugged grey
Hovers off, the jay-blue heavens appearing
Of pied and peeled May!
Blue-beating and hoary-glow height; or night, still higher,
With belled fire and the moth-soft Milky Way,
What by your measure is the heaven of desire,
The treasure never eyesight got, nor was ever guessed what for
the hearing?

The Wreck of the Deutschland,
stanza 26 (Poems, 60)

Here the poet attempts to imagine the "heaven of desire" for which the seven nuns are heading in terms of natural, earthly beauty; but he realizes at the beginning of the next stanza that language, due to its imperfection, does not yield more than an inadequate and insufficient description: "No, but it was not these." "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" comes closer to a successful actualization of futurity;⁵⁸ but it was only nine months before his death when Hopkins reached a point of genuine, poetic prophecy by means of a poem "in which a great deal of early Greek philosophical thought was distilled" (Letters to Bridges, 291):

⁵⁸ Cf. chapter 6, pp. 157-8

"That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the comfort of the Resurrection"

Cloud-puffball, torn tufts, tossed pillows flaunt forth, then
chevy on an air-
built thoroughfare: heaven-roysterers, in gay-gangs they
throng; they glitter in marches.
Down roughcast, down dazzling whitewash, wherever an
elm arches,
Shivelights and shadowtackle in long lashes lace, lance, and
pair.
Delightfully the bright wind boisterous ropes, wrestles, beats
earth bare
Of yestertempest's creases; in pool and rutpeel parches
Squandering ooze to squeezed dough, crust, dust; stanches,
starches
Squadroned masks and manmarks treadmire toil there
Footfretted in it. Million-fueled, nature's bonfire burns on.
But quench her bonniest, dearest to her, her clearest-selved
spark
Man, how fast his firedint, his mark on mind, is gone!
Both are in an unfathomable, all is in an enormous dark
Drowned. O pity and indignation! Manshape, that shone
Sheer off, disseveral, a star, death blots black out; nor mark
Is any of him at all so stark
But vastness blurs and time beats level. Enough! the Resur-
rection,
A heart's-clarion! Away grief's gasping, joyless days, de-
jection.

Across my foundering deck shone
A beacon, an eternal beam. Flesh fade, and mortal trash
Fall to the residuary worm; world's wildfire, leave but ash:

In a flash, at a trumpet crash,
I am all at once what Christ is, since he was what I am, and
This Jack, joke, poor potsherd, patch, matchwood, immortal
diamond,

Is immortal diamond.

(Poems, 105-6)

The first part of the sonnet calls attention to an external world of Heraclitean change and flux. Similar to Hopkins' conception which holds that the visible beauty of "inscapes" depends on their piedness, Heraclitus considers contrasts and oppositions to be the most basic characteristics of reality: qualities like good or bad can only be understood from the point of view of their opposites. Therefore the Heraclitean universe is full of tension and strife and secures the continuation of existence by a constant exchange between opposites, and first of all between fire and water, between

life and death: "..., her clearest-selved spark / Man, how fast his fire-dint, his mark on mind, is gone! / Both are in an unfathomable, all is in an enormous dark / Drowned." Since Heraclitus attributes fire as the purest and highest form of matter to the human soul too, in a world of continuous flux, man's soul is also subjected to material change: the realm of water stands for the soul's death, but, on the grounds of the universe's eternal, cyclic ongoingness, not only means its destination but also its origin. This kind of immortality ascribed to the soul however takes place in ever linear and monotonous time and can therefore not be the goal of a man like Hopkins who believed in the soul being lifted up to a higher pitch of self after death. Although both Heraclitus and Hopkins regarded the disintegration of nature and the "foundering" of the human body as a transitory stage and as the beginning of a new life in and through water,⁵⁹ Hopkins' "heart's-clarion" evokes a terminal change which will be the end of time itself.

What therefore distinguishes the Heraclitean philosophy (which conceives of nature and time as a process of permanent destruction and renewal) from Hopkins' view is the latter's Christian belief that both the universe and the life of individual man end in quite different states from those in which they began.⁶⁰ Consequently, Hopkins' pattern of contrast and

⁵⁹ Cf. Heraclitus, "Fragment 84", op. cit., 67: "What awaits men at death they do not expect or even imagine."

⁶⁰ Here Hopkins moves closer to Hegel again who also considered the synthesis to take place on a higher level (cf. chapter 4, p. 69, footnote 24).

union, as it is expressed by his poetry, is neither periodic nor merely cyclic but open-ended because every synthesis tends to differ from the preceding one: poetry's union of contrast on the occasion of the first great synthesis is for instance superseded by the second great synthesis of silence. Thus Hopkins' attitude towards writing and towards what he utters therein mirrors his permanent strife to get to an ever more ideal standard of being in order to reach beyond the destiny of Creation to Resurrection and Salvation.

Hopkins' distinction between the spiritual and the material, i.e. between the human and the natural, devalues "nature's bonfire" of steady, Heraclitean regeneration: it turns into "world's wildfire" consuming everything and leaving nothing "but ash". Hopkins' "beacon, the eternal beam" of Resurrection, by contrast, brings up more than a Phoenix-like propagation from its own ashes or a contingent, Heraclitean renewal through fire; man overcomes the fate of disintegrated nature (and of fading song) by ascending to the highest state of grace;⁶¹ Hopkins triumphantly and prophetically postulates the speaker's perfect identity with Christ at the very moment of his death.⁶² Thus something which has not occurred yet and which is therefore beyond the

⁶¹ Cf. *Sermons*, 154. 253.

Furthermore, if we read the poem's coda carefully, it becomes evident from the beginning what Hopkins meant by the "beacon" that shone "across my foundering deck": it is the cross, only poorly hidden in "across".

⁶² For Milton too, death provides man's union with Christ:

To better life shall yield him, where with mee
All my redeem'd may dwell in joy and bliss,
Made one with me as I with thee am one.

Paradise Lost, XI/42-4 (Milton, 299)

power of words is nevertheless expressed as present actuality: "In a flash, at a trumpet crash, / I am all what Christ is, since he was what I am." This timeless union with Christ promises the most supreme personal destiny a Christian may experience. The second great synthesis of self-sacrifice and Resurrection implies a final transubstantiation of which the alchemists could have only dreamed: by turning the it is of Parmenidean being⁶³ into the "I am" of Christian unification a worthless fragment which does not possess any true self is changed--not into gold--but into what it was always supposed to be: the whole, priceless, Christ-inspired gem of perfectly rhyming beatitude: "This Jack, joke, poor potsherd, patch, matchwood, immortal diamond, / Is immortal diamond."

⁶³ Cf. Journals, 127

S E L E C T I V E B I B L I O G R A P H Y

Primary Literature (GMH)

- Abbott, C.C. ed. The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges. 2nd rev. impression. London: Oxford University Press, 1970
- Abbott, C.C. ed. The Correspondence of Gerard Manley Hopkins and Richard Watson Dixon. 2nd rev. impression. London: Oxford University Press, 1970
- Abbott, C.C. ed. Further Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins, including his Correspondence with Coventry Patmore. London: Oxford University Press, 1956
- Bischoff, D.A. ed. "3 Uncollected Letters". Hopkins Research Bulletin 4 (1974): 3-14
- Bridges, Robert. ed. Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins. London: Humphrey Milford, 1918
- Bridges, Robert. ed. Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins. 2nd ed. London: Oxford University Press, 1930
- Bridges, Robert. ed. Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins. 3d ed. enlarged by W.H. Gardner. London: Oxford University Press, 1948
- Bump, Jerome. "Hopkins at Stonyhurst: A Letter to his Father". Library Chronicle of the University of Texas (Austin) 8 (1974): 47-51
- Devlin, Christopher. ed. The Sermons and Devotional Writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins. London: Oxford University Press, 1959
- Gardner, W.H., and MacKenzie, Norman H. eds. The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins. 4th enlarged ed. London: Oxford University Press, 1967
- House, Humphry. ed. The Note-Books and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins. London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1937
- House, Humphry. ed. The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Compl. by Graham Storey. London: Oxford University Press, 1959
- MacKenzie, Norman H. "The Imperative Voice--an Unpublished Lecture by Hopkins" ('On Duty'). Hopkins Quarterly 2, 1975: 101-16
- Pick, John. ed. and select. A Hopkins Reader. London: Oxford University Press, 1953
- Roberts, Gerald. ed. Selected Prose. London: Oxford University Press, 1980

- Storey, Graham. "Hopkins and William Butterfield: A New Letter". Hopkins Research Bulletin 5, 1974: 3-5
- Storey, Graham. "Three New Letters from Gerard Manley Hopkins to W.A. Comyn Macfarlane". Hopkins Research Bulletin 6, 1975: 1-7
- White, Norman. "Fragments of Poems by Gerard Manley Hopkins Omitted from 4th ed.". Times Literary Supplement. August 22, 1968

Primary Literature (Other authors)

- Addison, Joseph, and Steele, Richard. The Spectator. Ed. by Gregory Smith. 4 vols. London: Everyman, 1973
- Arnold, Matthew. Complete Prose Works. Ed. by R.H. Super. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960-77
- Berry, Wendell. Collected Poems 1957-1982. San Francisco: North Point Press, 1985
- Blake, William. The Complete Poetry and Prose. Ed. by David V. Erdman. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982
- Bridges, Robert. The Selected Letters of Robert Bridges. Ed. by Donald E. Stanford. Vol. 1. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1983
- Browning, Robert. The Poems. Ed. by John Pettigrew. 2 vols. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. The Complete Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Ed. by W.G.T. Shedd. New York: Harper, 1856
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. The Poetical Works. Ed. by James Dykes Campbell. London: Macmillan, 1895
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. The Complete Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Ed. by Ernest Hartley Coleridge. 2 vols. Oxford Clarendon Press, 1957
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. Biographia Literaria. Ed. by J. Shawcross. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979
- Descartes, René. Oeuvres Philosophiques. Ed. by Ferdinand Alquié. 3 vols. Paris: Garnier, 1963
- Donne, John. The Poems of John Donne. Ed. by Herbert J.C. Grierson. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. The Complete Essays and Other Writings. Ed. by Brooks Atkinson. New York: The Modern Library, Random House, 1940

- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. Sämtliche Werke. Hrsg. von Hermann Glockner. Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 1964
- Heraclitus. The Art and Thought of Heraclitus: An Edition of the Fragments with Translation and Commentary. Ed. by Charles H. Kahn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979
- Herbert, George. The Works. Ed. by F.E. Hutchinson. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941
- Loyola, Ignacio de, Saint. The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. Transl. by Louis J. Puhl. Westminster: Newman Press, 1951
- Milton, John. Sonnets. Ed. by E.A.J. Honigmann. New York: Macmillan, 1966
- Milton, John. Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained. Ed. by Christopher Ricks. Signet Classic. New York: New American Library, 1982
- Newman, John Henry. The Philosophical Notebook. Ed. by Edward Sillem. 2 vols. Louvain: Nauwelaerts, 1969-70
- Newman, John Henry. An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent. Westminster Md.: Christian Classics, 1973
- Plato. The Collected Dialogues of Plato Including the Letters. Ed. by Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns. Bollingen Press Series 71. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980
- Pound, Ezra. Selected Poems. Ed. and introd. by T.S. Eliot. London: Faber and Gwyer, 1926
- Ruskin, John. Praeterita: Outlines of Scenes and Thoughts Perhaps Worthy of Memory in My Past Life. London: Hart-Davis, 1949
- Shelley, Percy Bisshe. Selected Poems, Essays and Letters. Select. and ed. by Ellsworth Barnard. New York: Odyssey Press, 1944
- Tennyson, Alfred Lord. The Poetical Works. Ed. by G. Robert Stange. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974
- The New English Bible with the Apocrypha. Oxford and Cambridge: Oxford and Cambridge University Press, 1970
- Thomas, à Kempis. Of the Imitation of Christ. Transl. by Justin Mc Cann. Westminster Md.: Newman Press, 1952
- Whitman, Walt. Leaves of Grass. Ed. by Malcolm Cowley. New York: The Viking Press, 1959
- Wordsworth, William. Poems. Ed. by Stephen Gill. The Oxford Authors. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984

Critical Works

- Andreach, Robert J. "Gerard Manley Hopkins". In: Studies in Structure: The Stages of the Spiritual Life in Four Modern Authors. London: Burns and Oates, 1964, 12-39
- Attridge, Derek. The Rhythms of English Poetry. New York: Longman, 1982
- Baker, James V. "The Lark in English Poetry". Prairie Schooner 24 (1950): 70-9
- Ball, Patricia M. The Central Self: A Study in Romantic and Victorian Imagination. London: The Athlone Press, 1968
- Ball, Patricia M. The Science of Aspects: The Changing Role of Fact in the Work of Coleridge, Ruskin, and Hopkins. London: The Athlone Press, 1971
- Bender, Todd K. Gerard Manley Hopkins: The Classical Background and Critical Reception of his Work. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1966
- Bergonzi, Bernard. Gerard Manley Hopkins. New York: Macmillan, 1977
- Beyette, Kent. "Grace and Time as Latent Structures in the Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins". Texas Studies in Literature and Language 16 (1974): 705-21
- Borrello, Alfred. A Concordance of the Poetry in English of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Metuchen N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1969
- Bottrall, Margaret. Gerard Manley Hopkins: Poems: A Casebook. London: Macmillan, 1975
- Bottrall, Margaret. "A Poet of Epiphanies". Theoria to Theory 11 (1977): 81-95
- Boulger, James D. "The Numinous in Poetry". Thought 54 (1979): 143-61
- Boyle, Robert. "Time and Grace in Hopkins' Imagination". Renaissance 29 (1976): 7-24
- Brémond, André. "Art and Inspiration". New Verse 14 (1935): 5-12
- Brogan, T.V.F. English Versification 1570-1980: A Reference Guide with a Global Appendix. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981
- Brooke-Rose, Christine. A Grammar of Metaphor. London: Secker and Warburg, 1965
- Brooks, Cleanth, and Warren, Robert Penn. Understanding Poetry. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976

- Brown, Alec. "Gerard Hopkins and Associative Form". Dublin Magazine 3 (1928): 6-20
- Bruns, Gerald L. "The Idea of Energy in the Writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins". Renaissance 29 (1976): 25-42
- Bump, Jerome. Gerard Manley Hopkins. Boston: Twayne, 1982
- Bump, Jerome. "Reading Hopkins: Visual vs. Auditory Paradigms". Bucknell Review: A Scholarly Journal of Letters, Arts and Science 26 (1982): 119-45
- Burke, Kenneth. and Hopper, Stanley Romaine. "Mysticism as a Solution to the Poet's Dilemma: Part I". In: Spiritual Problems in Contemporary Literature. Ed. by S.T. Hopper. New York: Harper, 1957, 98-103
- Carson, J. Angela. "The Metaphor of Struggle in 'Carrion Comfort'". Philological Quarterly 49 (1970): 547-57
- Cervo, Nathan. "Scotistic Elements in the Poetry of Hopkins". Hopkins Quarterly 10 (1983): 55-68
- Clark, Ann K. "Metaphor and Literal Language". Thought 5 (1977): 366-80
- Clarke, Richard Frederick. "The Training of a Jesuit". Nineteenth Century 40 (1896): 211-25
- Cohen, Selma Jeanne. "The Poetic Theory of Gerard Manley Hopkins". Philological Quarterly 26 (1947): 1-20
- Coogan, Marjorie D. "Inscape and Instress: Further Analogies with Scotus". PMLA 65 (1950): 66-74
- Cotter, James Finn. Inscape: The Christology and Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 1972
- Cotter, James Finn. "'Hornlight Wound to the West': The Inscape of the Passion in Hopkins' Poetry". Victorian Poetry 16 (1978): 297-313
- D'Arcy, Martin C. The Mind and Heart of Love: Lion and Unicorn: A Study in Eros and Agape. New York: Holt and Co., 1947
- Day-Lewis, C. A Hope for Poetry. 2nd ed. Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1935
- Deutsch, Babette. Poetry in Our Time. New York: Columbia University Press, 1956, 286-311
- Devlin, Christopher. "Hopkins and Duns Scotus". New Verse 14 (1935): 12-5
- Devlin, Christopher. "Time's Eunuch". Month 1 (1949): 303-12
- Devlin, Christopher. "The Image and the Word--Part I and II". Month 3 (1950): 114-27. 191-202

- Dillican, Robert J., and Bender, Todd K. A Concordance to the English Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970
- Donoghue, Denis. "In the Scene of Being". Hudson Review 14 (1961): 232-46
- Donoghue, Denis. "Hopkins: The World's Body". In: The Ordinary Universe. London: Faber and Faber, 1968, 78-89
- Downes, David A. Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Study of his Ignatian Spirit. London: Vision Press, 1960
- Downes, David A. "Beatific Landscapes in Hopkins". Hopkins Quarterly 1 (1974): 37-60 / 1 (1975): 185-201
- Downes, David A. The Great Sacrifice: Studies in Hopkins. Lanham, New York, London: University Press of America, 1983
- Dumbleton, W.A. "Coleridge and Gerard Manley Hopkins". Ariel: A Review of International English Literature 3, 2 (1972): 17-31
- Durrell, Lawrence. "Gerard Manley Hopkins". In: Key to Modern Poetry. London: Peter Nevill, 1952, 164-77
- van Dyke, Henry. The Christ Child in Art: A Study of Interpretation. New York: Harber, 1894
- Eble, Joseph. "Levels of Awareness: A Reading of Hopkins' 'Felix Randal'". Victorian Poetry 13 (1975): 129-35
- Eleanor, Mother Mary. "The Debate of the Body and the Soul". Renaissance 12 (1960): 192-7
- Eliot, T.S. After Strange Gods. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1934
- Empson, William. Seven Types of Ambiguity. 3rd ed. London: Chatto and Windus, 1956
- Endean, Philip. "The Spirituality of Gerard Manley Hopkins". Hopkins Quarterly 8 (1981): 107-29
- Epstein, E.L. "'Heaven-Haven': A Linguistic-Critical Description". Essays in Criticism (Oxford) 23 (1973): 137-45
- Ferns, John. "Activity in Silence: Gerard Manley Hopkins' Journal 1866-75". Hopkins Quarterly 2 (1976): 163-74
- Fletcher, John Gould. "Gerard Manley Hopkins: Priest or Poet?". American Review 6 (1936): 331-46
- Foltz, William D. "Hopkins' Greek Fire". Victorian Poetry 18 (1980): 23-34
- Frazer, James G. The Golden Bough: The Roots of Religion and Folklore. New York: Avenel, 1981

- Fry, Paul H. The Poet's Calling in the English Ode. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980
- Fulweiler, Howard W. "Gerard Manley Hopkins and the 'stanching, quenching ocean of a motionable mind'". Victorian Newsletter 30 (Fall 1966): 6-13
- Gallet, René. "A propos de l'instress (et de l'inscape)". Hopkins Quarterly 10 (1983): 69-75
- Gardner, W.H. Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Study of Poetic Idiosyncrasy in Relation to Poetic Tradition. 2 vols. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948-9
- George, A.G. "Nature as Poetic Theme in Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Influence of the Bible on his Nature Lyrics". Literary Criterion 9,3 (1970): 14-26
- Gibson, Walker. "Sound and Sense in G.M. Hopkins". Modern Language Notes 73 (1958): 95-100
- Griffiths, Leslie. "The Great Sacrifice: The Incarnation in the Thinking of Gerard Manley Hopkins". Church Quarterly 4 (1971): 60-71
- Grigson, Geoffrey. The Contrary View. London: Macmillan, 1976
- Gross, Harvey. Sound and Form in Modern Poetry: A Study of Prosody from Thomas Hardy to Robert Lowell. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1964
- Gunter, Richard. "Grammar, Semantics, and the Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins". Hopkins Quarterly 1 (1974): 23-6
- Hallgarth, Susan A. "A Study of Hopkins' Use of Nature". Victorian Poetry 5 (1967): 79-92
- Harby, Clifton. The Bible in Art. New York: Covici and Friede, 1936
- Harris, Daniel A. Inspirations Unbidden: The Terrible Sonnets of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982
- Harrison, Thomas P. "The Birds of Gerard Manley Hopkins". Studies in Philology 54 (1957): 448-63
- Hartman, Geoffrey H. "Hopkins". In: The Unmediated Vision. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954, 49-67, 185-8
- Hartman, Geoffrey H. A Collection of Critical Essays. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1966
- Hartman, Geoffrey H. "Hopkins Revisited". In: Beyond Formalism. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1970, 231-46
- Henderson, Philip. "Gerard Manley Hopkins". In: The Poet and Society. London: Secker and Warburg, 1937, 103-31

- Heuser, Alan. The Shaping Vision of Gerard Manley Hopkins.
London: Oxford University Press, 1958
- Heywood, Terence. "Hopkins and Bridges on Trees". Poetry Review 29 (1938): 213-8
- Hill, Geoffrey. "Redeeming the Time". Agenda 10,4 (1972) and 11,1 (1973): 87-111
- Hollander, John. The Figure of Echo: A Mode of Allusion in Milton and After. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981
- Hollander, John. Rhyme's Reason: A Guide to English Verse.
New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981
- Hollander, John. Vision and Resonance: Two Senses of Poetic Form. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985
- Holloway, Sister Marcella. The Prosodic Theory of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1947
- Holloway, Sister Marcella. "Hopkins' Theory of Antithetical Parallelism". Hopkins Quarterly 1 (1974): 121-35
- Humiliata, Sister Mary. "Hopkins and the Prometheus Myth".
PMLA 70 (1955): 58-68
- Jakobson, Roman. "Linguistics and Poetics". In: Essays on the Language of Literature. Ed. by Seymour Chatman and Samuel R. Levin. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1967
- Jennings, Elizabeth. "The Unity of Incarnation: A Study of Gerard Manley Hopkins". Dublin Review 234 (1960): 170-84
- Johnson, Michael L. "Hopkins, Heraclitus, Cosmic Instress and of the Comfort of the Resurrection". Victorian Poetry 10 (1972): 235-42
- Johnson, Wendell Stacy. "The Imagery of Gerard Manley Hopkins: fire, Light and the Incarnation". Victorian Newsletter 16 (Fall 1959): 18-23
- Johnson, Wendell Stacy. Gerard Manley Hopkins: The Poet as Victorian. New York: Cornell University Press, 1968
- Johnson, Wendell Stacy. "Half Way to a New Land: Herbert, Tennyson, and the Early Hopkins". Hopkins Quarterly 10 (1983): 115-23
- Kapitulka, Krystina. Structural Principles of Gerard Manley Hopkins' Poetry. Warsaw: Poznan, 1976
- Kitchen, Paddy. Gerard Manley Hopkins. London: Hamilton, 1978
- Kite, Elizabeth S. "Conflict and Vision in Hopkins". America 65 (1941): 411-2

- Korg, Jacob. "Hopkins' Linguistic Deviations". PMLA 92 (1977): 977-86
- Landow, George P. Victorian Types, Victorian Shadows: Biblical Typology in Victorian Literature, Art and Thought. Boston and London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980, 177-202
- Lane, Ronald. "Gerard Manley Hopkins, Poet of Two Worlds". American Benedictine Review 29 (1978): 260-74
- Lawler, Justus George. Celestial Pantomime: Poetic Structures of Transcendence. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979
- Leamon, Warren. "Prayer in the Age of Criticism: The Hopkins Problem". South Carolina Review (Clemson University) 12, 1 (1979): 36-43
- Leavis, F.R. "Evaluations (IV): Gerard Manley Hopkins". Scrutiny 12 (1944): 82-93
- Leavis, F.R. "Gerard Manley Hopkins", "The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins". In: The Common Pursuit. London: Chatto and Windus, 1952, 44-72
- Leavis, F.R. "Gerard Manley Hopkins". In: New Bearings in English Poetry: A Study of the Contemporary Situation. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1964, 159-93
- Leggio, James. "Hopkins and Alchemy". Renascence 29 (1977): 115-30
- Lichtmann, Maria Ruth. "Parallelism in the Poetics and Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins". Ph. D. dissertation. Yale University, 1982
- Litzinger, Boyd. "The Pattern of Ascent in Hopkins". Victorian Poetry 2 (1964): 43-7
- Loneragan, Bernard J.F. Insight: A Study of Human Understanding. New York: Longmans, 1967
- Lynch, Michael. "Recovering Hopkins, Recovering Ourselves". Hopkins Quarterly 6 (1979): 107-17
- Mc Chesney, Donald. A Hopkins Commentary. London: University of London Press, 1968
- Mc Chesney, Donald. "The Meaning of 'Inscape'". Month 40 (1968): 52-63
- Mc Ghee, Richard D. Marriage, Duty, and Desire in Victorian Poetry and Drama. Lawrence Kansas: The Regents Press of Kansas. 1980, 177-232
- MacKenzie, Norman H. Hopkins. Edingburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1968
- Mc Namee M.B. "The Ignatian Meditation Pattern in the Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins". Hopkins Quarterly 2 (1975): 21-28

- Mathison, John. "The Poetic Theory of Gerard Manley Hopkins". Philological Quarterly 26 (1947): 21-35
- Miller, J. Hillis. "The Creation of the Self in Gerard Manley Hopkins". E L H 22 (1955): 293-319
- Miller, J. Hillis. "Gerard Manley Hopkins". In: The Disappearance of God. Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press: Belknap Press, 1963, 270-359
- Miller, J. Hillis. "The Linguistic Moment in 'The Wreck of the Deutschland'". In: The New Criticism and After. Ed. by Th. Young. Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1976, 47-60
- Miller, J. Hillis. "Nature and the Linguistic Moment". In: Nature and the Victorian Imagination. Ed. by U.C. Knoepfelmacher and G.B. Tennyson. Berkeley: University of California, 1977, 440-51
- Milroy, James. The Language of Gerard Manley Hopkins. London: André Deutsch, 1977
- Milward, Peter. "The Divided Self in Shakespeare and Hopkins". Thought 47 (1972): 253-70
- Milward, Peter. Landscape and Inscape: Vision and Inspiration in Hopkins' Poetry. London: Elek, 1975
- Milward, Peter. "Poet of Landscape and Inscape". Hopkins Research 11 (1982): 1-12
- Miyoshi, Masao. The Divided Self: A Perspective on the Literature of the Victorians. New York: New York University Press, 1969
- Monsman, Gerald. "Hopkins and the 'here / Buckle!' of Creation". Hopkins Quarterly 5 (1978): 23-31
- Mooney, Stephen. "Hopkins and Counterpoint". Victorian Newsletter 18 (1960): 21-2
- Motto, Marylou. 'Mined with a Motion': The Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins. New Brunswick N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1984
- Nassar, Eugene. "Hopkins' 'Figura', and Grace: God's Better Beauty". Renaissance 17 (1965): 128-30, 136
- Nist, John. "Sound and Sense: Some Structures of Poetry". College English 23 (1962): 291-5
- Norris, Carolyn Brimely. "'Fused Images' in the Sermons of Gerard Manley Hopkins". Tennessee Studies in Literature 7 (1962): 127-33
- Ong, Walter J. "Evolution, Myth, and Poetic Vision". Comparative Literature Studies 3 (1966): 1-20
- Parker, Patricia, and Hosek, Chaviva. Lyric Poetry: Beyond New Criticism. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985

- Pater, Walter. The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry. London: Macmillan, 1935
- Peters, W.A.M. Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Critical Essay towards the Understanding of his Poetry. London: Oxford University Press, 1948
- Phare, Elsie Elizabeth. The Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933
- Philipson, Dom W. "Gerard Manley Hopkins". Downside Review 5 (1933): 326-48
- Pick, John. Gerard Manley Hopkins, Priest and Poet. 2nd ed. London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1942
- Pick, John. "Hopkins' Imagery: The Relation of his Journal to his Poetry". Renaissance 7 (1954): 30-8
- Polletta, Gregory T. "Hopkins and Modern Poetics". In: On Poetry and Poetics. Ed. By Richard Waswo. vol. 2 of Spell: Swiss Papers in English Language and Literature. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1985, 62-91
- Prendeville, Brendan. "Visible Thought". British Journal of Aesthetics 7 (1967): 339-47
- Prioleau, Elizabeth. "The Nights of Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Mystical Starscape". Victorian Poetry 21 (1983): 85-91
- Proffitt, Edward. "The Moving Image: Hopkins as Cinematographer". Hopkins Quarterly 8 (1981): 21-2
- Rader, Louis. "Hopkins' Dark Sonnets: Another New Expression". Victorian Poetry 5 (1967): 13-20
- Rader, Louis. "An Important Echo". Hopkins Quarterly 3 (1976): 77-9
- Raine, Kathleen. "Hopkins' Nature and Human Nature". Sewanee Review 81 (1973): 201-24
- Raymond, William O. "'The Mind's Internal Heaven' in Poetry". University of Toronto Quarterly 20 (1951): 215-32
- Read, Herbert. "The Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins". In: English Critical Essays, 20th Century. Ed. by Phyllis M. Jones. London: Oxford University Press, 1933, 351-74
- Richards, I.A. "Gerard Hopkins". Dial (New York) 81 (1926): 195-203
- Ricks, Christopher. Milton's Grand Style. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963
- Riddle, Florence K. "Hopkins' Dramatic Monologues". Hopkins Quarterly 2 (1975): 51-66

- Ritz, Jean-Georges. Robert Bridges and Gerard Hopkins 1863-89: A Literary Friendship. London: Oxford University Press, 1960
- Ritz, Jean-Georges. Le Poète Gerard Manley Hopkins 1844-1889: l'homme et l'oeuvre. Paris: Didier, 1963
- Roberts, Gerald. "The Countryman as Hero: A Note". Hopkins Quarterly 9 (1982): 79-83
- Robinson, John. In Extremity: A Study of Gerard Manley Hopkins. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978
- Ruggles, Eleanor. Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Life. New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1944
- Salmon, Rachel. "'Wording it How': The Possibilities of Utterance in 'The Wreck of the Deutschland'". Hopkins Quarterly 10 (1983): 87-108
- Sapir, Edward. "Gerard Hopkins". Poetry 18 (1921): 330-6
- Schiller, Gertrud. Iconography of Christian Art. 2 vols. New York: Graphic Society, 1971
- Schneider, Elizabeth W. The Dragon in the Gate: Studies in the Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968
- Shaw, W. David. "Victorian Poetry and Repression: The Use and Abuse of Masks". E L H 46 (1979): 468-94
- Shaw, W. David. "The Agnostic Imagination in Victorian Poetry". Criticism 22 (1980): 116-39
- Shaw, W. David. "The Optical Metaphor: Victorian Poetics and the Theory of Knowledge". Victorian Studies 23 (1980): 293-324
- Shaw, W. David. "Mimesis as Invention: Four Interpretative Models in Victorian Poetry". New Literary History 12 (1982): 303-28
- Sieveking, Lance. "Gerard Manley Hopkins". In: The Eye of the Beholder. London: Hulton Press, 1957, 275-85
- Sitwell, Edith. Aspects of Modern Poetry. London: Duckworth, 1934, 51-72
- Smith, Lyle H. "Beyond the Romantic Sublime: Gerard Manley Hopkins". Renascence 34 (1982): 173-84
- Sobel, Emilie. "Rhythm, Sound, and Imagery in the Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins". In: Between Reality and Fantasy: Transitional Objects and Phenomena. Ed. by Simon A. Grolnik and Leonard Barkin. New York: Aronson, 1978, 425-45
- Sprinker, Michael. A Counterpoint of Dissonance: The Aesthetics and Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980

- Stambler, Peter. "Selvino: The Sense of Perfection in Hopkins".
Thoth (Syracuse University, New York) 12,2 (1972): 21-37
- Storey, Craham. A Preface to Hopkins. Harlow: Longman, 1981
- Sulloway, Alison G. Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Victorian
Temper. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972
- Sulloway, Alison G. "Ignatius Loyola and the Victorian Temper".
Hopkins Quarterly 1 (1974): 43-57
- Sutherland, Donald. "Hopkins again". Prairie Schooner 35 (1961):
197-242
- Tanner, John S. "When God is Hero: Worshipping God as Hero
in Carlyle and Hopkins". Hopkins Quarterly 10 (1984):
145-63
- The Kenyon Critics. Gerard Manley Hopkins. Norfolk Conn.:
New Directions Book, 1945
- Thomas, Alfred. "Gerard Manley Hopkins: 'Doomed to Succeed
by failure'". Dublin Review 240 (1966): 161-75
- Thomas, Alfred. Hopkins the Jesuit: The Years of Training.
London: Oxford University Press, 1967
- Thornton, R.K.R. ed. All My Eyes See: The Visual World of
Gerard Manley Hopkins. Sunderland: Ceolfrith Press, 1975
- Thornton, R.K.R. "The Diagram of a Mind". Hopkins Quarterly
3 (1976): 47-58
- Walliser, Stephan. That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire: A Case
Study of Gerard Manley Hopkins' Poetry. Cooper Monographs
on English and American Language and Literature 26. Bern:
Franke, 1977
- Walsh, Elizabeth. "Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Study in Counterpoise".
Southern Review (Louisiana State University) 12 (1976):
64-82
- Warren, Austin. "Gerard Manley Hopkins". In: Rage for Order.
Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948, 52-65
- Weyand, Norman. ed. Immortal Diamond: Studies in Gerard Manley
Hopkins. London: Sheed and Ward, 1947
- White, Norman. "Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Irish Row".
Hopkins Quarterly 9 (1982): 91-107
- Wimsatt, William K. The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning
of Poetry. Louisville: University of Kentucky Press, 1954
- Wimsatt, William K. Day of the Leopards: Essays in Defense
of Poetry. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976
- Wolfe, Patricia A. "The Paradox of Self: A Study of Hopkins'
Spiritual Conflict in the 'Terrible' Sonnets". Victorian
Poetry 6 (1968): 85-103

Zaniello, Thomas A. "The Tonic of Platonism: The Origins
and Use of Hopkins' 'Scape'". Hopkins Quarterly 5 (1978):
5-16

Zaniello, Thomas A. "The Stonyhurst Philosophers". Hopkins
Quarterly 9 (1982): 133-59

Curriculum Vitae

I was born on August 21 1956 in Aarau in the Canton of Aargau. After having completed the compulsory years at the local schools (Primary School 1963-68, "Bezirksschule" 1968-72) I entered Aarau's college ("Kantonsschule") in 1972 from where I graduated after four more years in 1976 ("Matur", type B). In the fall of the same year I started my studies at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Zurich. I adhered to my three special fields of English Language and Literature, New French Literature and Science of Communication until I took my degree in November 1983 ("Lizentiat Phil.I"). Various trips and stays abroad, years of commitments as a first division handball-player and periods of military formation represented further important experiences during the time of my studies. After my final examinations for the "Lizentiat" I undertook the writing of a Ph. D. dissertation which, under the direction of Professor Dr. Peter Hughes, was to lead me deeper and deeper into the world of Gerard Manley Hopkins' poems, journals and letters. As far as this literary research was concerned my stay at Yale University, New Haven, where I had the opportunity of working as a Research Scholar for over a year, proved extremely fruitful.

After getting my doctor's degree I will begin to work for a Swiss bank in Basel where I have settled with my wife and my son after my return from the United States.

